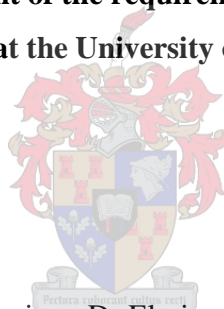


**THE RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION OF HETEROSEXUAL COUPLES IN ONE LOW-
INCOME, SEMI-RURAL WESTERN CAPE COMMUNITY**

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**Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
(Psychology) at the University of Stellenbosch**



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March 2009

STATEMENT

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SUMMARY

Effective interventions are hindered by a lack of context-specific data on how South African men and women construct and experience intimate heterosexual relationships. Most studies exploring committed heterosexual relationships have been conducted with White populations living in developed countries. As relationship satisfaction is seen as a requirement for a good quality relationship, this study examined the relationship satisfaction of committed heterosexual couples in one low-income, semi-rural Western Cape community. A cross-sectional survey approach was used to examine relationship satisfaction among heterosexual married and unmarried couples. A random sample of 100 couples was drawn from the community, 93 of which were included in the final analyses, on the criterion that both partners were interviewed. Trained fieldworkers administered a demographic and relationship questionnaire, as well as three relationship satisfaction measures namely the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, the Index of Marital Satisfaction and the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale. Analyses were conducted using the statistical programme Statistica 7.0 and both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed separately for men and women. Inferential statistics included Spearman correlations, repeated measures ANOVA, and reliability analyses.

Results show that although, on average, neither men nor women were clinically dissatisfied with their relationships, women reported significantly lower relationship satisfaction than men. Significant relationships were found between relationship satisfaction and a number of demographic variables, including the male partner's educational attainment (with the female partner's relationship satisfaction); female partner's perception of her male partner's religiosity (with both her own and her male partner's relationship satisfaction); own church attendance (with own relationship satisfaction), female partner's church attendance (with her male partner's relationship satisfaction), and joint church attendance (with both female and male relationship satisfaction); sharing a bedroom at night with children, sharing a bed at night with children, and sharing a bed at night with partner. Demographic variables found to have a *non*-significant relationship with relationship satisfaction included: age; church affiliation; employment; and couple monthly income.

Although there were several trends that tended towards significance, the only relationship variables found to be significantly related to relationship satisfaction were previous marriages and, for cohabiting couples, the age at commencement of cohabitation. Relationship variables found to have a *non*-significant relationship with relationship satisfaction included: relationship status; relationship duration; age at marriage for married couples; reason for marriage (for married couples) or for marriage

in the future (for unmarried couples); number of significant relationships; and a number of children-related variables. Results are discussed and recommendations are made for future research.

OPSOMMING

Effektiewe intervensies oor hoe Suid-Afrikaanse mans en vroue intieme heteroseksuele verhoudings konstrueer en ervaar, word deur 'n tekort aan konteks-spesifieke data verhinder. Die meeste studies wat toegewyde heteroseksuele verhoudings bestudeer, is in wit populasies in ontwikkelde lande uitgevoer. Aangesien verhoudingsatisfaksie as 'n voorvereiste vir 'n goeie kwaliteit verhouding gesien word, het hierdie studie die verhoudingsatisfaksie van toegewyde, heteroseksuele paartjies in 'n lae-inkomste, semi-plattelandse Wes-Kaapse gemeenskap ondersoek. 'n Kruis-snit opname benadering is gebruik om die verhoudingsatisfaksie onder heteroseksuele getroude en ongetroude paartjies te ondersoek. 'n Ewekansige steekproef van 100 paartjies is uit die gemeenskap getrek, waarvan 93 in die finale analise ingesluit is, op grond van die vereiste dat beide maats ondervra is. Opgeleide veldwerkers het 'n demografiese- en verhoudingsvraelys toegepas, sowel as drie verhoudingsatisfaksie maatstawe, naamlik die Dyadic Satisfaction subscale van die Dyadic Adjustment Scale, die Index of Marital Satisfaction en die Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale. Analises is met die statistiese program Statistica 7.0 uitgevoer en beide beskrywende en inferensiële statistieke is afsonderlik vir beide mans en vroue uitgewerk. Inferensiële statistieke het Spearman korrelasies, herhaalde-metings-ANOVA, en betroubaarheidsanalises ingesluit.

Resultate toon dat, ondanks die feit dat nie mans of vroue klinies ontevrede met hul verhoudings was nie, vroue tog beduidend laer verhoudingsatisfaksie as mans gerapporteer het. Beduidende verwantskappe tussen verhoudingsatisfaksie en verskeie demografiese veranderlikes is gevind, insluitend die manlike verhoudingsmaat se vlak van opleiding (met die vroulike verhoudingsmaat se verhoudingsatisfaksie); vroulike verhoudingsmaat se siening van haar manlike verhoudingsmaat se godsdienstigheid (met beide haar eie en haar manlike verhoudingsmaat se verhoudingsatisfaksie); eie kerkbywoning (met eie verhoudingsatisfaksie), vroulike verhoudingsmaat se kerkbywoning (met beide vroulike en manlike verhoudingsatisfaksie), en gesamentlike kerkbywoning (met beide vroulike en manlike verhoudingsatisfaksie); deel van 'n slaapkamer, snags, met kinders, deel van 'n bed, snags, met kinders, en deel van 'n bed, snags, met 'n verhoudingsmaat. Demografiese veranderlikes wat 'n onbeduidende verwantskap met verhoudingsatisfaksie toon, sluit in: ouderdom; kerkaffilasie; aanstelling; en gesamentlike maandelikse inkomste.

Ondanks verskeie beduidende tendense, is die enigste verhoudingsveranderlikes wat beduidende verwantskappe met verhoudingsatisfaksie getoon het vorige huwelike en, vir samewonende paartjies,

die ouderdom by aanvang van saamwoning. Verhoudingsveranderlikes wat geen beduidende verwantskap met verhoudingsatisfaksie getoon het nie, sluit in: verhoudingstatus; verhoudingsduur; trou-ouderdom vir getroude paartjies; rede vir huwelik of huwelik in die toekoms; hoeveelheid beduidende verhoudings; en hoeveelheid kind-verwante veranderlikes. Resultate word bespreek en aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing word gemaak.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to the following people:

Dr Elmien Lesch, my supervisor, for your unwavering guidance, patience and support throughout the process of this research. I will be forever grateful for your wisdom, compassion, strength, dedication, understanding and encouragement. The time and energy you invested in this research and in me have been limitless. Your supervision and mentorship have made a significant impact on my life, contributing to both my professional and personal development.

My family, in particular my parents, Barry and Kathleen Engelbrecht, whose love and support provided the foundation for me to pursue my postgraduate studies. I would not be where I am today if it weren't for both of you. Thank-you for everything.

Professor Martin Kidd, of the Centre for Statistical Consultation (University of Stellenbosch), for your contribution to the statistical analysis of this study. Many hours were dedicated to answering my endless questions and requests for analyses.

The Project on Intimate Relationships for its structural and financial support. In particular, the assistance of fieldworkers trained by the project was invaluable during data collection.

The University of Stellenbosch for financial assistance in the form of a Postgraduate Merit Bursary.

The couples who participated in the present study – without whom this research would not have been possible – thank-you for welcoming us into your community.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Motivation

This study investigated the relationship satisfaction of couples in one low-income, semi-rural Western Cape community and formed part of a larger on-going research project which explores how these couples construct and experience their intimate heterosexual relationships (IHR). The importance of close personal relationships (CPR) for human well-being motivated both the larger project and the present study, and will be briefly discussed below before focusing on relationship satisfaction.

Close personal relationships refer to a range of relationships, including, but not exclusive to our most intimate relationships (Perlman & Vangelisti, 2006). There are a broad range of psychosocial benefits associated with good quality CPR. Knowledgeable researchers in the field of social support have, over two decades of research, demonstrated the connection between social support and CPR (e.g., Sarason, Sarason & Gurung, 2001; Hooley & Hiller, 2001). For example, the mundane context of daily interaction in CPR can be supporting, can affect recognition of needs for and provision of social support, and can influence the interpretation of others' actions in seeking or providing support (Leatham & Duck, 1990, cited in Badr, Acitelli, Duck & Carl, 2001). Furthermore, many researchers acknowledge the role that CPR play in the connection between social support and health outcomes (e.g., Sarason et al., 2001). In one of the two papers commonly acknowledged as seminal to the field of social support, Cassel (1976) referred to the importance of "meaningful social contact" for health (quoted in Sarason et al., 2001). Good quality CPR can also play a crucial role in the prevention of major mental disorders, for example, schizophrenia and mood disorders (Hooley & Hiller, 2001). In addition, there is much evidence demonstrating the relationship between social support and particular aspects of life, including health status, illness, recovery from illness, and adjustment and psychological functioning (Sarason et al., 2001). The fact that most meaningful social contact for the majority of people is provided by those they regard as their intimates underlines the importance of CPR for health outcomes.

While CPR can provide psychosocial benefits for the individuals involved, they can also be detrimental to the wellbeing of individuals. This rings true in the South African context, especially for women, who experience a range of psychosocial problems that frequently occur within the context of or are influenced by their IHR. (According to Prager (1995), intimate relationships is a particular type or set

of CPR in which intimate interactions occur on a regular and consistent basis.) These psychosocial problems have adverse effects on their emotional, mental, physical, social and economic wellbeing. For example, Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Levin, Ratsaka and Schrieber (1999) found the following in South Africa: emotional, physical and financial abuse are common features of IHR; physical violence often continues during pregnancy and represents a significant cause of reproductive morbidity; women are often injured by their partners and sizeable health sector resources are expended providing treatment for these injuries; and injuries result in costs being sustained in other sectors, particularly to the family and the women's community, as well as to employers and the national economy. Violence against women, in particular, is a serious human rights abuse and public health issue. Women are at far greater risk of physical or sexual violence and coercion by a partner than by other people (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise & Watts, 2006).

The quality of IHR also has the ability to shape *family* wellbeing. For instance, it is related to important family outcomes such as poorer parenting, problematic attachment to parents, poorer child adjustment, increased likelihood of parent-child conflict, and conflict between siblings (Fincham & Beach, 1999). Marital satisfaction specifically has an important role in family well-being as marital satisfaction has been shown to have strong intra- and intergenerational effects (Johnson & Booth, 1998). The bulk of problems for which people obtain professional help concern their spouse or partner (McAllister, 1995) and marital satisfaction is seen as the final common pathway that leads to marital breakdown (Jacobson, 1985). Marital dissatisfaction is also consistently linked with depression (e.g., Hollist, Miller, Falceto & Fernandes, 2007) and anxiety (e.g., Caughlin, Huston & Houts, 2000), several studies have shown marital dissatisfaction to be associated with morbidity and mortality (e.g., Coyne et al., 2001; Kimmel et al., 2000; Orth-Gomer et al., 2000).

Decreased social constraints, increased alternatives, and heightened pair instability, has increased the importance of partners' relationship satisfaction in the maintenance of IHR (Levinger, 1997). Consequently, relationship satisfaction has been afforded a central status in relationship research and has been the dominant construct studied (Fincham & Beach, 2006). Because the majority of research on satisfaction has been conducted with married couples, *marital satisfaction* has been the term most frequently used. However, a changing world where different relationship forms are becoming increasingly common (e.g., the cohabitation of partners in a marriage-like relationship: Cherlin, 2000) necessitates broadening the term *marital satisfaction* to the more encompassing term of *relationship satisfaction* so as to include the diversity of relationship types. Accordingly, *relationship satisfaction* is

the term used in the present study. However, where research refers to *marital satisfaction*, the author has named it as such (and, thus, uses the terms interchangeably). Similarly, *partner* is the term utilised in the present study. However, where the literature refers to specific terms (e.g., *husband*, *wife*, and *spouse*), it has been named as such.

The sheer magnitude of research and literature on relationship satisfaction attests to the importance placed on understanding relationship satisfaction, as an end in itself, and as a means to understanding its effect on numerous other processes inside and outside the family. The rationale for studying relationship satisfaction stems from its centrality in individual and family well-being (e.g., Stack & Eshleman, 1998), from the benefits that accrue to society when strong, good quality marriages are established and maintained (e.g., desistance from crime; Laub, Nagin & Sampson, 1998), and from the need to develop empirically defensible interventions for couples that prevent (e.g., Hahlweg, Markman, Thurmaier, Engl & Eckert, 1998) or alleviate (e.g., Baucom, Shoham, Mueser, Daiuto & Stickle, 1998) IHR distress and instability.

Although it is evident that relationship satisfaction has an important influence on key aspects of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being, there has been limited research on this topic in South Africa. Research is specifically needed in low-income, semi/rural communities that have been historically disadvantaged. We have limited knowledge of how women and men in these communities experience their IHR (Conradie, 2006). Most relationship research has been conducted with White populations in developed countries (Fincham & Beach, 2006) and the applicability of these findings for different South African groups should thus be questioned (Lesch, 2006). This necessitates the generating of community-specific information that reflects how these particular communities construct and experience their IHR. The present study, therefore, explored the relationship satisfaction of heterosexual couples in one low-income, semi-rural Western Cape community.

1.2 Organisation of Dissertation

The introduction, motivation for, and broad aim of the research has been presented in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2 the theoretical departure point of the present study, social constructionism, is presented, and low-income, semi-rural Western Cape communities are contextualised. In addition, the theoretical issues around relationship satisfaction are discussed. Chapter 3 reviews findings from research on relationship satisfaction conducted both internationally and in the South African context. Literature pertaining to the relationship between gender and relationship satisfaction is also reviewed quite

extensively, followed by a brief review of recent findings on the associations between relationship satisfaction and various demographic and relationship variables. In Chapter 4 research objectives are presented and the empirical study is outlined. In Chapter 5 the results of the present study are presented and discussed. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses limitations and strengths of the present study, draws conclusions from the present findings, and provides final recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUALISATION

2.1 Social Constructionism as Broad Theoretical Departure Point of the Present Study

As previously mentioned, the present study formed part of a larger research project which aims to investigate how couples in one low-income, semi-rural Western Cape community construct and experience their IHR. The project focuses on generating community-specific information, taking its theoretical departure point from social constructionism. Social constructionists argue that human beings make sense of their experience through constructions of meaning (White, 2004), with social and cultural contexts informing the way a person perceives or makes sense of his or her world (Wortham, 1996). Against an inherited historical, social backdrop; action is rendered meaningful within a context, and the meanings which motivate actions are defined in terms of shared convention rather than in terms of individual representations of reality (Durrheim, 1997).

Social constructionism is not a unitary framework but encompasses numerous different, overlapping perspectives that have informed approaches to anthropology, political studies, literary criticism, sociology and cultural studies (Durrheim, 1997). Social constructionism is critical of traditional psychology in a number of important ways and, therefore, can be understood as a critique (Durrheim, 1997): First of all, it resists the institutionalised dominance of empiricism as the guiding philosophy of the human sciences, opposing the idea of a single truth and a paramount theory encompassing the ultimate truth. According to social constructionism, facts and truths are at all times perspectival interpretations which can only become known against the backdrop of socially shared understandings. Secondly, rather than focusing on psychopathologies, social constructionism encourages the pursuit of ways to facilitate people's psychological well-being. Thirdly, social constructionism is anti-individualist, rather focusing on microsocial processes in understanding human behaviour.

Although social constructionism originated and has been considerably influenced by its resistance to empiricism, it can also be described more positively as a subjective and active involvement with how people make meaning of their lives and as an orientation that appreciates and validates the numerous ways that different people make meaning of their lives in their various contexts (Lesch, 2000). Social constructionism proposes that people respond to their own definition of reality rather than an external reality (Ibáñez, 1994), and since reality is subjectively constructed, multiple realities are possible

(Becvar & Becvar, 2006). Indeed, social constructionists (e.g., Gergen, 1991) argue that there are as many realities as there are contexts, cultures, and ways of communicating.

Social constructionism is about relationships. The self is viewed as relational rather than individual; the self is recognised not as an autonomous, isolated being, but as constructed in relationships. Thus, our realities are constructed in relationships with others. Individuals are constantly negotiating the meaning of their close relationship activities, feelings and thoughts within specific social settings (Duck, West & Acitelli, 1997). Sociocultural practices and belief systems present the individual with constructs that make his or her experiences meaningful, and these constructs are developed in a person's daily interactions in specific relational contexts (Wortham, 1996). Shotter (1993) refers to *joint action* which is the cooperative development and implementation of shared functional meanings that arise when people interact. Social constructionists argue that people develop their intimate relationships through their thoughts, feelings, and interactions, and emphasise social processes more than innate, biological processes in human behaviour and development (Harvey & Wenzel, 2006).

In sum, social constructionists propose a merged view of the person and his or her social context where the boundaries of one cannot be easily separated from the boundaries of the other (e.g., Wortham, 1996). Social contexts should therefore be taken into account when conducting relationship research. The project within which this study was conducted, therefore, explores IHR in one specific community and also collects data that will inform about the specific social context of this community.

2.2 Contextualising Low-Income, Semi-Rural Western Cape Communities

Cape Town is the most densely populated area of the Western Cape, but 40% of the province's population live outside the Cape Town metropolitan in small towns and rural settlements (May et al., 2000). Approximately 57% of the Western Cape population is 'Coloured' (May et al., 2000). The nature of 'Coloured' identity has always been a point of intense ideological and political contestation. The author is, therefore, mindful that the use of racial categories in South African scholarship is controversial and supports the need to move beyond them. These categories are socially constructed, however, and carry important social meanings (Swartz, Gibson & Gelman, 2002). Leading South African psychological researchers (see for instance Walker & Gilbert, 2002) have argued that the use of such categories in social research is important because it highlights the impact that Apartheid had on specific groups of people. The term 'Coloured' was used to categorise people of 'mixed' racial origins

under the Apartheid system and, as evidenced by the participants in this study self-identifying as ‘Coloured’, the term is still used by people to refer to race or ethnicity.

However, ‘Colouredness’ has functioned as a social identity from the time it emerged in the late nineteenth century through to its adaptation to post-apartheid. In his systematic investigation of ‘Coloured’ identity, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough*, Adhikari (2005) shows how the interplay of racial hierarchy, marginality, assimilationist aspirations, ideological conflicts, negative racial stereotyping, and class divisions have helped to mold people’s sense of ‘Coloured’ identity over the past century. Specifically, he highlights the following core characteristics rooted in the social situation and historical experience of ‘Coloured’ people that regulated the manner in which ‘Colouredness’ functioned as a social identity under white domination: (a) the assimilationism of ‘Coloured’ people, which prompted hopes of acceptance into the dominant society in the future; (b) their intermediate status in the racial hierarchy, generating fears that they could lose their position of relative privilege and be consigned to the status of ‘Africans’ (Adhikari uses this term to refer to the indigenous Bantu-speaking peoples of South Africa); (c) the negative connotations with which ‘Coloured’ identity was imbued, especially the shame associated with their supposed racial hybridity; and finally (d) the marginality of ‘Coloured’ people, the source of a great deal of frustration.

Erasmus and Pieterse (1999) point to the validity of ‘Coloured’ identity formation by conceptualising ‘Coloured’ identities in the following ways: Firstly, like all identities, ‘Coloured’ identity is constructed, unstable, and heterogeneous. Identities are constructed and are meaningful in particular social contexts. It is important for one to view the content of this meaning in its socio-political, historical, cultural and spatial contexts. Conceptualising formations of identity as processes involving active agents or subjects challenges the notion that ‘Coloured’ identities are simply White-imposed by slave-owners and/or apartheid politicians and that they are passively accepted by ‘Coloured’ people. Rather, it facilitates a conceptualisation that takes into account the important role that ‘Coloured’ people played and continue to play in giving meaning to their own identities.

Second of all, from a historical approach, processes of identity formation are embedded in specific historical contexts. Accordingly, ‘Coloured’ identity is constructed and re-constructed in particular social contexts. Such an approach permits one to acknowledge that processes of ‘Coloured’ identity formation can be defined by what they ‘are’, that is, valid processes of identity formation which shift

with place, time and space. Relevant historical processes include dislocation in the context of slavery, and cultural dispossession in the context of subordination of indigenous people and genocide.

Finally, in the historical context of slavery, colonialism and apartheid, all processes of identity formation in South Africa have been molded by racialised relations of social power. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) highlight the importance of understanding racialised identities in relation to particular sets of social relations, rather than as homogeneous, abstract categories. In understanding racialised identities as based on the particularity of experiences, the common view that 'White' and 'Black' are homogeneous binary opposites is challenged. 'Coloured' identities have been shaped by very particular racist discourses. Rather than viewing 'Coloured' as a specific category of persons and/or as simply an imposed name from a racist history, it is important to conceptualise 'Coloured' identities as relational identities shaped by intricate networks of social relations. This approach is valuable in that it acknowledges the particularity of identities and challenges notions of 'Colouredness' as an essentialist and/or homogeneous ethnic identity with set cultural boundaries.

'Coloured' Afrikaans-speaking people make up the majority of farm workers in the Western Cape (London, 1999). They reside either on the farms or are drawn from nearby small rural towns. Under past apartheid policies, farm workers occupied a particularly marginalised position in an already unequal society and the legacy of these policies is still evident today in the multitude of poor social indicators for farm workers (London, 1999). For example, the wages of farm workers are extremely low (Donaldson & Roux, 1994) and inadequate water supplies and poor sanitation in semi/rural communities are frequently reported (Department of Health, 1994). The lack of housing security is a significant problem for farm workers given that access to housing is dependent on employment and on the farm worker's relationship with his or her employer (Greenberg, Hlongwane, Shabangu & Sigudla, 1997). A paucity of workplace health and safety measures has also been reported (London, 1994).

Agricultural semi/rural populations compared to urban populations in the Western Cape differ in terms of income, unemployment, and poverty. Although unemployment rates are lower among agricultural populations, poverty rates are higher (De Lange & Faysse, 2005). This could be explained by the lower rural wages of people in semi/rural agricultural areas who are generally farm workers. In addition, educational levels of farm workers are low, with research indicating an average of five schooling years (London, 1995), and estimates of illiteracy ranging from 20% to 30% (Kritizinger & Vorster, 1996). Rural health and social services are grossly under-resourced in rural farming areas (Harrison, Barron &

Edwards, 1996) and farm workers' access to health services is constrained by their dependence on employers for transport (Greenberg et al., 1997).

Economic, social and emotional distress is an adverse consequence of such structural inequalities (Swartz, 1997). Within this context, psychosocial problems are prevalent, including stress, drug and alcohol abuse and dependency, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) family fragmentation, school truancy, conflict and violence including IPV, and the use of weapons (e.g., Gibson, 2004, cited in Lesch, 2006; London, 1999; May et al., 2000). Many people in the Western Cape participate in growing grapes and producing wine, and this has influenced regional drinking patterns (May et al., 2000). For several centuries, in partial payment for labour, wine was distributed among and consumed daily by farm workers in what is referred to as the "Dop" system (London, 1999). The "Dop" system has been made illegal by at least two legislative acts, but residual patterns of regular and heavy alcohol consumption by farm workers remain prevalent in low-income, semi/rural Western Cape communities. Additionally, increased availability of inexpensive commercial wine and beer in shebeens (illegal bars) has exacerbated problems of heavy drinking, and weekend binge drinking is a major form of recreation (May et al., 2000). It is, thus, not surprising that today semi/rural Western Cape communities are characterised by alcohol abuse and fetal alcohol syndrome. Alcohol consumption among farm workers in these communities is twice that of their urban counterparts (London, Nell, Thompson & Myers, 1998). Of the traumatic injuries seen at rural clinics almost half are related to alcohol – these rates are approximately 30% higher than those for urban residents in Cape Town (National Trauma Research Programme, 1994).

May and colleagues (2000), investigating FAS in a primarily 'Coloured' Western Cape Community (approximately one-fifth rural), documented the highest FAS rate to date in an overall community sample, some 18 to 141 times greater than the rates in the United States (compared with, for example, Abel & Sokol, 1991). All of the children with FAS in the study were 'Coloured', and within the 'Coloured' group, those with the lowest socio-economic status (SES) were overrepresented in the FAS cases. FAS was more common in rural than in urban schools. This may be reflective of increasing socio-economic resources among urban residents, or urban areas might simply provide escape from a heavy-drinking social environment. Accordingly, May and colleagues argue that residence on grape-growing, wine-producing farms is an important risk factor for FAS.

In sum, many semi/rural 'Coloured' communities in the Western Cape are characterised by extreme poverty, unemployment, poor or non-existent health and welfare facilities, inadequate or crowded housing, and extremely inadequate provision of education (e.g., Pauw, 2005). These communities have unique histories that are frequently characterised by specific psychosocial problems such as IPV, alcohol abuse, and FAS.

Another important factor to consider in the context of low-income, semi-rural Western Cape farming communities is that of gender. While there are wide-ranging changes regarding gender equity at a political level, the gap between constitutional and legal change and women's lived realities has also been widely recognised (e.g., Gouws, 2005). The complex intersection between gender, 'race', class and other forms of historical and current inequality mean that the majority of South African women remain extremely poor, with limited access to political or material power. This complex intersection between gender, 'race', and class can be seen in the societal position of female farm workers in the Western Cape who are primarily 'Coloured' and have limited income. As a group they hold a particularly marginalised and powerless position in South African society (Kritzinger & Vorster, 1998).

The following demographic information regarding female farm workers is cited from a study by Kritzinger and Vorster (1995, cited in Kritzinger & Vorster, 1998) conducted between 1994 and 1995 (it must be noted, therefore, that these conditions may have changed significantly in the past few years, but more recent data could not be located): Most female farm workers in fruit farming were 'Coloured', Afrikaans-speaking, and between the ages of 20 and 40 years. While 75% of women had seven years of schooling or less, one-fifth reported illiteracy. The average age of women entering farm employment was 18 years. Almost half of female farm workers were married, 18% cohabited with a partner, and 34% were single (including 6% divorcees and widows). Most female farm workers had their first child between the ages of 16 and 20 years. The majority of female farm workers who had children reported that their first child was unplanned and that they were unmarried at the time of the child's birth. Most of the single women had children and lived with their parents.

'Coloured' female farm workers in particular have almost no independent access as workers to either employment or housing provided by the farm owner (Kritzinger & Vorster, 1995, cited in Kritzinger & Vorster, 1998). The female farm worker's employment and access to housing is dependent on her membership of a farm worker family or her relationship to a male farm worker (as a partner or child). When hiring male farm workers it is assumed or frequently explicitly stated that women are obligated

to work. In the case of the partner's or father's termination of employment, the woman is expected to leave the farm. Only rarely does the farm owner permit her to remain in employment and in such cases the female farm worker is expected to move out of the housing she shared with her partner or father and move in with another family. Housing is allocated to the male farm worker on the basis that he is the 'breadwinner' of his family.

Traditional gender roles and relations are still dominant in economically disadvantaged, historically disenfranchised Western Cape communities (Shefer et al., 2008). For example, in low-income farm worker households in the Western Cape, Knye, Ottermann and Alberts (1997) found that both men and women upheld traditional views of women's roles. Traditional notions of male dominance and female subservience are still evident, along with traditional gender roles that mandate a division of labour between the household (women's domain) and the paid workforce (men's domain). Women focus on the family and on domestic reproduction while men fulfill the traditional role of 'breadwinner'. Women are expected to be submissive to their male partners, and men are constructed as the primary decision-makers (Strebel et al., 2006). Churches are viewed as supportive of these traditional roles (Strebel et al., 2006), as is 'traditional culture', in that women are expected to obey men and to obtain permission from their male partners for their actions (Shefer et al., 2006). Family structures also reinforce the women's dependence on male partners, as women are often told to remain in abusive IHR for the sake of the family (Strebel et al., 2006).

Christian churches as social institutions are increasingly being challenged by feminism from within their own ranks (e.g., Goedhals, 1992). Saide and Van Aardt (1995) argue that Christian churches in South Africa reinforce gender stereotypes. Generally, this is done through theological views on the nature of women; and specifically by means of male-oriented leadership which characterises congregational and denominational structures. In a Reformed congregation, Swemmer, Kritzinger and Venter (1998) found that while both women and men recognised the importance of the role of husband and father, it was particularly men who appeared to hold this role in high esteem. The role of the father was conceptualised as protector of the family and as a role model for his children, in order that sons would learn how to be fathers and daughters would learn how to respect men. Women were seen to possess specific characteristics which enable them to fulfill their roles of mother and homemaker. Children and everything that affects them was the responsibility of women. Women's roles were held in less esteem than men's roles and women were expected to provide support for the man in the family. Women themselves tended to emphasise the man as the 'leader' of the household. Respondents in this

study frequently located their ideas about gender relations within the teachings of Christianity. For example, one male elder said the following (p. 169):

Ja, die man vervul eintlik nie sy rol nie, want hy is geroepe om die leier te wees. Die godsdienstige leier te wees. Dit staan so in die Bybel ook. Kyk, Adam was die eerste gebore. Die Bybel is eintlik gerig op die mans...die mans is die leiers. As jy lees Efesieërs 5 sê dat die man is die hoof van die huis.

There are several texts in the New Testament of the Bible that suggest that male dominance in marriage is ordained by God and hence is morally correct (Dowling, 1991). These texts affirm the subordination, dependence, and, in some cases, the inferiority of women. Paul's views have been especially influential in justifying what many twentieth-century Christians view as the God-given male dominance over women. For example, Paul writes: "For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man" (1 Corinthians 11: 8-9).

Related to the role divisions and power disparities of traditional gender roles is gender-based violence (Jewkes et al., 1999). Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher (1999) found that men who reported the abuse of female partners were younger, less educated, more likely to be 'Coloured', and more likely to consume alcohol and drugs. Such statistics indicate that low-income 'Coloured' communities that are characterised by heavy alcohol consumption (such as the population in the present study) are particularly at risk for IPV. Research respondents offer a number of explanations for such violence, some serving as rationalisation or justification. For instance, the discourse that women sometimes expect to be beaten, seeing it as a sign of love. This belief is especially evident in 'Coloured' communities (Shefer et al., 2008). Feminist discourses purport that traditional gender roles and male ownership of women facilitate men's sense of entitlement to beat their female partners (Strebel et al., 2006).

With the shifting power relations between men and women in present day South Africa, men are frequently viewed as being undermined by women and women are seen as responsible for men's loss of power (Shefer et al., 2008). Men report feeling disempowered and marginalised relative to women in their communities, or at least they embrace this narrative as a rationale for their resistance to the shifting power balance and resources for women. A common perception is that because men's power has been undermined by women, men would be physically violent towards their partners (Strebel et al., 2006). In other words, the rationale that is offered for IPV is one based on the combination of changing

gender roles and economic and social marginalisation of men. The belief that men have lost power and status is frequently intertwined with a ‘blaming’ discourse that it is women who have caused the disempowerment of men. Boonzaier (2005) suggests that men experience a crisis of masculinity when they perceive they are losing a gendered power advantage, which consequently elicits gender-based violence or at least they use such a discourse as an explanation for their violence. Therefore, violence is not only used to maintain dominance and control, but to counteract real or imagined threats to ‘manhood’ (Mager, 1998).

2.3 Relationship Satisfaction: Conceptual and Methodological Issues

Marital satisfaction is a construct with a long but controversial history, variously labeled *marital satisfaction*, *marital quality*, *marital adjustment*, and *marital happiness* (Heyman, Sayers & Bellack, 1994). The central status afforded to marital satisfaction in relationship research became largely salient in two projects that are frequently recognised as establishing marital research as a field of empirical inquiry (Fincham & Beach, 2006): Terman and colleagues described a questionnaire study of 1,133 couples designed to identify the determinants of marital satisfaction in their 1938 book, *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness* (Terman, Bittenweiser, Ferguson, Johnson & Wilson, 1938). Similarly, in *Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage*, Burgess and Cottrell (1939) reported a questionnaire study of 526 couples. In their attempt to identify correlates of marital satisfaction, both books are established as classic texts and report studies that became the prototypes for later research.

Recent progress in the field of relationship satisfaction has been characterised more by the addition of ideas in a given research area rather than by building upon, and where appropriate, discarding existing ideas. Although progress has been marked by the degree of sophistication in the questions that are asked and not solely by the systematic accumulation of empirical findings, cumulative growth in the field of relationship satisfaction is hindered by the tendency to supplement rather than supplant or even integrate hypotheses and ideas. “The apparent increase in breadth without a corresponding increase in depth may be part of the price that is paid for conducting research on a complex topic where research designs usually preclude strong inferences of causation” (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000, p. 975).

2.3.1 Conceptual Issues

A lack of adequate theory on relationship satisfaction has contributed to conceptual confusion, resulting in a large overlap of terms, such as adjustment, success, happiness, companionship, or “some synonym reflective of the quality of the relationship” being used interchangeably to refer to satisfaction

(Fincham & Beach, 2006, p. 581). Faced with conflicting views of relationship satisfaction, it is tempting to want to identify the “real” relationship satisfaction. However, such an endeavor is ultimately self-defeating. The number of options available for understanding relationship satisfaction each, when adequately described, have merit. In sum, different perspectives on relationship satisfaction should not be rivaled against each other, but rather referents and purposes for which each perspective may most be suited should be carefully specified (Fincham & Beach, 2006).

Two dominant approaches have been used to study relationship satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2006). The first approach views relationship quality as a characteristic of the IHR between partners rather than, or in addition to, the partners’ feelings about the IHR. Terms such as relationship/marital adjustment have been favoured by this approach. The other dominant approach focuses on how partners feel about their IHR. This approach, to which self-report appears to be better suited, has tended to prefer terms like relationship/marital satisfaction and relationship/marital happiness.

Research on relationship satisfaction has ignored a fundamental question that can be asked of several psychological constructs, namely, “Does relationship satisfaction reflect an underlying continuum or are there discontinuities in satisfaction?” (i.e., continuum or category?; Fincham & Beach, 2006). It is important to understand the underlying structure of relationship satisfaction for a number of reasons (Fincham & Beach, 2006): First of all, with regard to the plausibility of linear versus nonlinear models in the study of IHR, nonlinear models often imply discontinuities and if a continuous dimension underlies scores of relationship satisfaction, it might be taken as a strike against such theories. Secondly, if a variable that could legitimately be treated as a continuous variable is dichotomised, the resulting effect on statistical power is the same as removing more than a third of one’s sample. This is wasteful and has the potential to lead to type two errors. Third, one might question the validity of the distinction between therapy participants who have “recovered” and those who have not “recovered” following couple therapy, if indeed there is no point of discontinuity in relationship satisfaction. As such, there are both practical and theoretical reasons to address the latent structure of relationship satisfaction.

There have been important developments in the conceptualisation of relationship satisfaction in recent years. First, as is implied by the routine use of the term *nondistressed* to describe couples who are satisfied, there is a growing appreciation for the view that a satisfying IHR is not merely characterised by the absence of dissatisfaction (Bradbury et al., 2000). Factors that lead to IHR distress may not

simply be the inverse of the factors that lead to a satisfying IHR. Continuing interest in the attributes of long-term satisfying IHR (e.g., Kaslow & Robinson, 1996), discussion of the defining features of a good quality marriage (e.g., Halford, Kelly & Markman, 1997), and a growing emphasis on social behaviours such as social support in IHR (e.g., Cutrona, 1996), all point to a developing conception of IHR and relationship satisfaction in which the unique dimensions of dissatisfying and satisfying relationships are recognised.

Second, the conceptualising of relationship satisfaction as a global evaluation of the IHR has focused on a bipolar conceptualisation, with dissatisfaction reflecting an evaluation of the IHR in which negative features are salient and positive features are relatively absent, and satisfaction reflecting an evaluation in which positive features are salient and negative features are relatively absent (Bradbury et al., 2000). However, Fincham and colleagues have challenged this view on the basis that positive and negative evaluations in IHR can be conceptualised and measured as separate, but related dimensions (Fincham, Beach & Kemp-Fincham, 1997). Data used to capture this two-dimensional conception of relationship satisfaction indicate that the two dimensions have different correlates and account for unique variance in reported IHR behaviors and attributions. Such noteworthy work draws attention to the important but largely overlooked distinction between positive and negative dimensions of IHR.

A third important development in the conceptualisation of relationship satisfaction is the notion that relationship satisfaction is appropriately conceptualised as a trajectory that reflects fluctuations in relationship evaluations over time, and not simply as a judgment made by partners at one point in time (Bradbury et al., 2000). Advantages of this perspective include the encouragement of multiwave longitudinal research on IHR (where two-wave longitudinal designs have predominated; see Karney & Bradbury, 1995) and the encouragement of researchers to specify a model of IHR change (where two-wave longitudinal designs assume a simple linear model). The use of a trajectory-based view of relationship satisfaction is increasing (e.g., Cox, Paley, Burchinal & Payne, 1999; Karney & Bradbury, 1997) and holds great promise for testing refined models of IHR change.

A fourth important development in the conceptualisation of relationship satisfaction is the application of a social-cognitive perspective (Bradbury et al., 2000). One example of this is the reconceptualisation of relationship satisfaction as an *attitude* toward the partner or IHR. The social-cognitive perspective has future value for offering new insights with regards to the correlates of relationship satisfaction, reactions to partner behaviour, and the impact of a variety of life contexts on relationship satisfaction.

As IHR is difficult to predict, measure, or define because of its complex and changing nature, so relationship satisfaction is an elusive construct that does not have a uniform definition (Heyman, Sayers & Bellack, 1994). Some relationship researchers have criticised the concept of relationship or marital satisfaction as being vague, ill-defined, and value-laden (e.g. Donohue & Ryder, 1982). According to Zuo (1992), marital satisfaction is the subjective feeling of happiness, satisfaction and pleasure experienced by married couples. Marital satisfaction refers to a spouse's personal experience of satisfaction or happiness with the marital relationship (Wolf, 1996). Similarly, Crawford (2002) defines marital satisfaction as an individual's subjective evaluation of the quality of the relationship. Relationship satisfaction has also been defined as "the extent to which both partners in the relationship are satisfied that it has fulfilled reasonable expectations and mutual needs" (Hunsley, Pinsent, Lefedvre, James-Tanner & Vito, 1995, cited in DeGenova, 2008, p. 175). Inherent in this definition is the recognition of individual differences in expectations and need requirements. Thus, what satisfies one couple might not satisfy another couple. In addition, it is important that *both* partners be satisfied for a relationship to be considered successful.

Researchers such as Fincham and Bradbury (1987) and Norton (1983) have defined marital satisfaction as spouses' global evaluations of their marriage. Accordingly, marital satisfaction focuses on spouses' subjective, affective experiencing of their own personal happiness and contentment with their close relationship. In accordance with this approach, the present study views relationship satisfaction as subjective, global evaluations of the relationship. The advantage of this approach is its conceptual simplicity (Fincham & Beach, 2006) and the problem of interpretation that crops up in many omnibus measures of relationship satisfaction is avoided. Its clear-cut interpretation also allows for the straightforward examination of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of relationship satisfaction. One criticism of this approach is the view that unidimensional, global scales, other than indicating that a couple is distressed or nondistressed, do not provide much information (Fowers, 1990). However, the conceptual clarity of this approach and the ease of measuring subjective, global evaluations of the IHR offer important advantages, and thus was chosen as the approach for the present study.

2.3.2 Methodological Issues

An important feature of literature on relationship satisfaction is the almost exclusive focus on Western, and especially on North American, IHR (Fincham & Beach, 2006). Most studies have been conducted with middle-class White participants and a small number of these studies have used nationally

representative random samples (Bradbury, 1995). Thus, the extent to which their findings can be generalised to all IHR is open to question. In addition, most of the assessment instruments used to study relationship satisfaction have focused on only one particular IHR, that of marriage (Fincham & Beach, 2006). This emphasises the need to use assessment instruments with couples other than those whose partners are married. Furthermore, the majority of international studies includes only one partner of the IHR and generally do not assess both partners' perspectives (Bradbury, 1995).

Related to the conceptual confusion in the field is the difficulty in determining exactly what it is that most relationship satisfaction instruments actually measure. As Fincham and Beach (2006) write, "Most frequently, measures comprise a polyglot of items, and responses to them are not conceptually equivalent" (p. 581). Thus, not many measures of relationship satisfaction attend to the level at which responses are to be interpreted. Because of overlapping item content in measures of relationship satisfaction and measures of constructs examined in relation to it, knowledge of the correlates and determinants of relationship satisfaction include an unknown number of spurious findings (Fincham & Beach, 2006).

An advancement of the relationship satisfaction field in the past several years is the increasing rate at which longitudinal studies have been conducted and published (Bradbury, 1995). Up until 1995, 155 research studies had been published in which either marital quality or stability was predicted from other variables measured earlier in time (for a review of these studies see Karney & Bradbury, 1995). While longitudinal studies on relationship satisfaction offer a number of advantages over cross-sectional designs, longitudinal studies on this topic have encountered similar pitfalls of cross-sectional research as well as the following limitations (Bradbury, 1995):

First of all, regarding many of the samples studied, participants were somewhat diverse in the duration of their IHR, whether or not they were previously married, and whether or not they had children. Previous research has shown that these factors can influence IHR, and the failure to investigate their unique effects in longitudinal research may mask their importance. Secondly, although longitudinal studies examine IHR over a period of time, the bulk are limited (by design or by method of data analysis) to investigating how IHR change from one point in time to a second point in time. Although this approach offers several advantages over cross-sectional designs, estimations of change in IHR are probably quite limited to the degree that they rely on only two waves of data. Because more than two

waves of data are rarely collected or analysed simultaneously and because attrition tends to be high and nonrandom, the inferential power in longitudinal studies tends to be lower than desired.

CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

3.1 Introduction

The field of relationship satisfaction is a dynamic one, with a broad range of established and emerging topics within this field. Recent years have witnessed a vast number of papers published on a wide array of topics pertaining to relationship satisfaction. In their 2000 review, *Research on the nature and determinants of marital satisfaction: A decade in review*, Bradbury and colleagues highlighted key conceptual and empirical advances in the field of marital satisfaction, with particular emphasis on:

- a. interpersonal processes operating within marriage, including affect, cognition, social support, behavioral patterning, physiology, and violence;
- b. the milieus within which marriages operate, including microcontexts (e.g., transitions, life stressors and the presence of children) and macrocontexts (e.g., perceived mate availability, economic factors); and
- c. the conceptualisation and measurement of marital satisfaction, including 2-dimensional, trajectory-based, and social-cognitive approaches (please note that has already been discussed in Chapter 2).

The impressive breadth and scope of work on relationship satisfaction demonstrates that research on this topic is not a literature unto itself but is dispersed over several overlapping, yet generally distinct, literatures. Relationship satisfaction has been addressed with vigor by scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Accordingly, the field of relationship satisfaction is a large and loosely organised field, and continues to expand rapidly in all directions. The ongoing high volume of activity in the field places a burden on relationship satisfaction scholars in that only a tenuous grasp of the depth and breadth of the field is to be had. Thus, periodic volumes that comprehensively but concisely describe current activities in the field of relationship satisfaction are urgently needed.

Recent research findings regarding the following areas of progress in understanding relationship satisfaction are presented next: (a) interpersonal processes in IHR, and (b) IHR processes in context (including microcontexts and macrocontexts). A great deal of attention has been given to evaluating the link between relationship satisfaction and interpersonal processes, while there has been comparatively less research on the contexts or milieus that may also influence relationship satisfaction.

3.2 Interpersonal Processes and Relationship Satisfaction

Interest in understanding the role of interpersonal processes in relationship satisfaction remains strong. Yet research has indicated that, despite some advances, these interpersonal processes are not easily studied and a comprehensive understanding of them is not yet within reach.

Pertaining to behavioural patterning, one of the best-documented findings in the relationship satisfaction field is that communication is a primary determinant of relationship satisfaction (e.g., Noller & Feeney, 2002). Studies have shown that the communication of satisfied couples is different from that of unsatisfied couples, in terms of both specific behaviours and of patterns or sequences of interaction (Whisman, 1997). Foremost among these is the demand-withdraw pattern (e.g., Caughlin & Huston, 2002). Both cross-sectional and longitudinal observational studies have demonstrated that communication, when explored systematically, is consistently and significantly related to couple's relationship satisfaction (Litzinger & Gordon, 2005).

With regards to cognition, major developments in the literature on partners' attributions include evidence for the association between explanations for relationship events and relationship satisfaction (e.g., Fincham, 2000), elaboration of the internal structure and organisation of attributions and other cognitive factors (e.g., Fincham, 2001), and additional longitudinal data relating attributions with relationship deterioration (e.g., Karney & Bradbury, 2000). Indeed, "the evidence for an association between attribution and marital satisfaction is overwhelming, making it possibly the most robust, replicable phenomenon in the study of marriage" (Fincham, 2001, p.7).

There has been a dramatic surge in research on the role of affect in relationship satisfaction and there is now reasonably clear evidence that affect is an essential factor to consider in accounting for the variability in relationship satisfaction (e.g., Holm, Werner-Wilson, Cook & Berger, 2001; Mirgain & Cordova, 2007). However, this association requires clarification because some studies indicate, for example, that negative affect hinders relationship satisfaction, whereas other studies indicate that it promotes relationship satisfaction or is unrelated to it (see Gottman & Notarius, 2000 for a discussion). Bradbury and colleagues (2000) contend that:

Definitive statements about the role of affect in eroding or supporting marital satisfaction await refinements in the conceptual underpinnings of affect-related constructs and in the methods used to observe emotional expressions and to discern their effects on marriage over time. (p. 966)

Occurring largely in conjunction with the growing emphasis on affect in the relationship satisfaction field is the increased research on physiological concomitants of interaction (for a review see Robles & Kiecolt-Glaser, 2003). Physiological changes associated with relationship functioning have long-term implications for health outcomes (Robles & Kiecolt-Glaser, 2003). For instance, several recent studies have shown marital dissatisfaction to be associated with morbidity and mortality (e.g., Coyne et al., 2001; Kimmel et al. 2000; Orth-Gomer et al., 2000).

Although support processes in IHR have long been a topic of interest, the topic has recently been addressed with increased vigor. Partner support has been consistently linked with relationship satisfaction (e.g., Lorenz, Hraba & Pechacova, 2004; Xu & Burleson, 2004). A noteworthy feature of recent research on partner support is the utilisation of methods such as observational and daily diary methods, allowing for more detailed exploration of potentially supportive interactions (Bradbury et al., 2000).

Important research has been conducted on relationship satisfaction and IPV (e.g., Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward & Tritt, 2004; Williams & Frieze, 2005). Low levels of relationship satisfaction have been one of the most frequently examined relational risk markers for IPV (e.g., Riggs, Caulfield & Street, 2000; Schumacher, Slep & Heyman, 2001). For example, in a meta-analytic review of marital satisfaction as a risk factor for IPV, Stith, Green, Smith and Ward (2008) found a significant negative relationship between marital satisfaction and IPV. Decreased relationship satisfaction can also be a consequence of IPV (e.g., Katz, Kuffel & Coblenz, 2002; Williams & Frieze, 2005). While it is not always possible to clarify whether low relationship satisfaction leads to IPV or whether low relationship satisfaction results from experiencing or perpetrating IPV, most research finds a relationship to exist.

3.3 Context and Relationship Satisfaction

Despite the widespread view that “the stuff and substance of an interpersonal relationship is the behavioral interaction between the partners” (Berscheid, 1995, p. 531), a number of scholars purport that the meaning and implications of behavioural interaction cannot be fully understood without taking into account the broader context in which those interactions occur.

Microcontexts

Children feature prominently in how IHR are experienced by couples and many studies have examined the link between relationship satisfaction and children (e.g., Cowan & Cowan, 1999). This literature is discussed in section 3.5 as it is particularly relevant to the present study.

Stressors external to the IHR frequently affect the way partners evaluate their relationship satisfaction (Neff & Karney, 2004). Although an oversimplification of a large and complex literature, research on relationship environments generally tends to address either: discrete, often traumatic events; work-related and economic stressors; or the total set of events and stressors to which couples might be exposed. The traumatic events that have been examined in relation to relationship satisfaction are numerous and range, for example, from child illness or death (e.g., Reyns, 2005) to cancer (e.g., Tuinman, Fler, Sleijfer, Hoekstra & Hoekstra-Weebers, 2005) to in vitro fertilisation (e.g., Verhaak et al., 2001). There is a large body of research on the links between marital satisfaction and job characteristics (e.g., Lloyd, King & Chenoweth, 2002) and economic or work stress (e.g., Neff & Karney, 2004).

Macrocontexts

It is important to consider that there are more encompassing, relatively slow-changing factors that have the potential to influence, to varying degrees, entire cohorts of couples, for instance, broader social conditions and institutions. Recent work indicates that relationship satisfaction can covary with aspects of these broader contexts. Such aspects include, amongst others, mate availability or perceived mate availability (e.g., Trent & South, 2003), acculturation (e.g., Kallampally, 2005), and neighbourhood socioeconomic disadvantage (e.g., Cutrona et al., 2003). For example, Negy and Snyder (1997) found that ratings of higher acculturation among Mexican American couples were related to lower levels of marital satisfaction for wives but unrelated to the relationship satisfaction of husbands.

Consistent with the family stress model (e.g., Conger & Elder, 1994), Cutrona et al. (2003) found that family financial strain predicted lower marital quality. Unexpectedly, neighbourhood-level economic disadvantage predicted higher marital quality. Two potential explanations were offered for this result: It is possible that married couples in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are better off financially than their neighbours. Downward comparison with their neighbours may engender positive emotions that favourably influence married couples' evaluations of their marriages. A second possible explanation involved the degree of exposure to racial discrimination. Two recent studies found that, among

African-Americans, exposure to discrimination is positively related to SES and education level (Kessler, Mickelson & Williams, 1999; Sigelman & Welch, 1991). Sigelman and Welch (1991) suggested that higher SES and education leads to more frequent interactions outside the African-American community, which are, in turn, linked with higher exposure to discrimination. Consequently, marital satisfaction may be negatively influenced by psychological stress due to exposure to racial discrimination (Murry, Brown, Brody, Cutrona & Simons, 2001).

Of particular interest in recent research are links between relationship satisfaction and various aspects of religiosity (e.g., Asamarai, Solberg & Solon, 2008), and also in how relationship satisfaction is related to couples' participation in religious practices and institutions (e.g., Fiese & Tomcho, 2001). Literature on religiosity and church attendance is discussed in section 3.5 as these variables are also particularly relevant to the present study.

At least as important as mere exposure to these macrocontext factors, is how people understand these factors as well as the extent to which they engage the relevant institutions (Bradbury et al., 2000). For example, perceptions of mate availability versus actual mate availability and spiritual activity versus religious identity. Consequently, there are most likely noteworthy differences in how different persons and couples respond to otherwise identical milieu or the related experiences they have had (Bradbury et al., 2000).

3.4 Gender and Relationship Satisfaction

3.4.1 Emergence of Interest in Marital Satisfaction and Gender

There appears to be differential meanings of contemporary marriage and other partnerships for men and women. Jessie Bernard (1972) argued that there are two marriages in every marital union, "his" and "hers", and that his is better than hers. The costs that the differences in this his-and-her marriage imposed on women's well-being were emphasised by Bernard. Glenn (1975) countered Bernard's claims with data indicating that husbands and wives had equivalent marital satisfaction scores. Bernard (1975) disputed Glenn's interpretations of that data, highlighting the overwhelming research literature on the mental health and mental illness of *married* women. Subsequent studies generally provided support for Bernard's claim (e.g., Gove, Hughes & Style, 1983). More recently, Fowers (1991) argued

that when Glenn (1975) cited national data to support his argument (of no gender difference¹ in marital satisfaction scores) he is dealing with average scores. Thus, his observations are valid but for the population at large.

In an attempt to reconcile the two positions, Schumm, Jurich, Bollman and Bugaighis (1985) using a sample of nearly 200 couples found that, although overall marital satisfaction scores did not vary significantly by gender, when one spouse was much less satisfied than the other, it was much more frequently the wife. At that time, Schumm et al. (1985) believed that the issue had been resolved, with Glenn found to be correct from a macrosociological perspective and Bernard found to be correct regarding the internal dynamics of a minority of marriages.

However, Fowers (1991), using a much larger sample of over 1,000 couples, replicated Schumm et al.'s (1985) study and found a significant difference in marital satisfaction related to gender. In his article entitled *His and her marriage: A multivariate study of gender and marital satisfaction* Fowers (1991) examined gender differences in marital satisfaction using the multidimensional marital inventory ENRICH (Olson, Fournier & Druckman, 1982). Contrary to previous research up until this point in time (e.g., Glen, 1975; Johnson, White, Edwards & Booth, 1986; Kazak, Jarmas & Snitzer, 1988; Williams, 1988), the results indicated that men were somewhat more satisfied with their marriages than women. Fowers (1991) found husbands to be more satisfied with their marriage than wives across a variety of relationship dimensions. Fowers' (1991) article reopened the debate because his data indicated that, on average, women were scoring lower on marital satisfaction (and other aspects of marital quality) than their husbands. Hence some family theorists, especially those who utilise feminist perspectives, might interpret such results as an indication that women are disadvantaged within the institution of marriage in the United States (Fowers, 1991).

3.4.2 Gender Differences in Relationship Satisfaction: A Review of the Research

Empirical research on gender differences in relationship satisfaction has been underway for a number of decades. Gender has been recognised as an important, but poorly understood influence on relationship satisfaction (Glenn, 1990; Heppner, Kivlighan & Wampold, 1992; Larson & Holman,

¹ On the basis that *gender differences*, rather than *sex differences* is the term most commonly used by researchers when examining the discrepancy in relationship satisfaction between men and women, *gender differences* is the term used in the present study. However, literature searches included both terms so as not to omit any relevant findings.

1994). Historically, there have been inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between gender and relationship satisfaction.

A number of researchers have suggested that gender may exert an important influence on relationship satisfaction, but reports of *how* gender functions with regard to relationship satisfaction vary. Although several researchers have found that men tend to describe their relationship more positively than women (e.g., Markman & Hahlweg, 1993), Feeny, Noller and Ward (1997) found no gender differences in marital satisfaction in their study of 355 married couples. Likewise, other researchers who found no relationship between gender and relationship satisfaction include Fincham and Grych (1991), Howell (1998), Molina (2000), and Moore, McCabe and Brink (2001).

In a turnaround of findings, King (2005) found women to report higher levels of marital satisfaction than men. However, this study was limited in that it did not utilise couples as its unit of analysis. Although King's finding is unexpected and stands in contrast to the usual findings, it is consistent with other research. For example, in Karney and Bradbury's (1995) meta-analysis of 115 articles on the longitudinal course of marital quality and stability, they found wives' satisfaction consistently reported to be equal to or even higher than that of their husbands. This shift in research findings may point toward societal changes that have given wives increasingly more options (Bradbury et al., 2000) and that have moved toward more equalisation of opportunities for women, giving wives more avenues for finding contributors to their sense of identity (Koehne, 2000).

However, research has historically shown male partners to be more satisfied with their IHR than their female partners (e.g., Johnson & Lebow, 2000; Rogers & Amato, 2000; Walker, 1999). Some researchers argue that, although gender differences in relationship satisfaction have been found, most previous studies of gender and relationship satisfaction have not been based on nationally representative samples.

In order to investigate this argument, Schumm, Webb and Bollamn (1998) used a nationally representative sample to explore gender differences in marital satisfaction. Within-couple analyses revealed an overall gender effect (at the 0.001 significance level), with wives significantly less satisfied than their husbands with their marriage. Marriages with substantial differences in reported marital satisfaction represented only 7% of the couples. However, within that minority of couples, there were more dissatisfied wives than husbands, lending support to the notion of a "his and hers" marriage

phenomenon within that minority of couples. Results of this study suggest that findings of gender differences in relationship satisfaction in previous studies were not artifacts of sample selection but may indeed generalise to the entire population of United States couples. Such results provide at least some minimal support for feminist assertions regarding the inequities of marriage that work against the marital satisfaction and possibly also the well-being of women (e.g., Bernard 1972; Steil, 1997). Conversely, the substantial research showing a non-significant relationship between relationship satisfaction and gender might well be argued by non-feminist scholars to be an indication that feminist anxieties about the inequalities of marriage or IHR are unfounded. Deciding among such differential perspectives may depend on how much influence such small relationships of relationship satisfaction and gender might have over extended periods of time across the life cycles of many millions of IHR.

Even in the most recent of years, whereas some studies have found significant gender differences in relationship satisfaction (e.g., Mickelson, Claffey & Williams, 2006; Williams & Frieze, 2005), others have failed to detect any overall differences between men and women in the absolute level of reported relationship satisfaction (e.g., Kito, 2005; Shi, 2003; Weisfeld & Stack, 2002). However, where gender differences within relationship satisfaction have been found, in almost all cases it was women who experienced lower relationship satisfaction than men (e.g., Dillaway & Broman, 2001). For example, studying the change in marital satisfaction scores (using four different measures) over the first four years of marriage, Karney and Bradbury (1997) found that wives were less satisfied with marriage at all eight times of data collection.

Consistent with much data reported in the West (e.g., Fowers, 1991), women have reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction than men in a number of countries other than the United States, for example, China (e.g., Lu, 2006; Shek, 1995; Shek & Tsang, 1993) and Taiwan (e.g., Shen, 2002). However, in a Turkish study (Hamamci, 2005), no relationship between gender and marital satisfaction was found. The findings of a multicultural, multi-country (Canada, Germany, Israel, Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, USA, and Chile) study on long-term marriages indicate that, generally, men reported greater marital satisfaction than women (Roizblatt et al., 1999).

In sum, international findings on gender differences within relationship satisfaction have been inconsistent. Furthermore, a review of the literature reveals that we know very little about the relationship between gender differences in relationship satisfaction and the duration of the IHR (Shek, 1995). For example, are the benefits of IHR for men cumulative in nature?

3.4.3 Potential Explanations for Inconsistencies in Findings

Most studies to date have been limited in terms of generalisability because they did not sample couples (Schumm, Webb, et al., 1998). Schumm and colleagues argue that the relationship of gender with relationship satisfaction in previous studies was not an artifact of sample selection but may indeed generalise to the entire population of United States couples.

Reports of relationship satisfaction are very likely affected by social desirability and, thus, the fact that a rather large majority of persons say that they are “very satisfied” in their relationships is not to be taken at face value (Schumm, Milliken, Poresky, Bollman, & Jurich, 1983). A sex difference in response bias seems more likely in the case of reported relationship satisfaction (Schumm, Milliken, et al., 1983), since admission of relationship failure might typically be a greater ego threat to females than to males (Cross & Madson, 1997).

Another potential explanation might be that small sample sizes and/or inadequate measurement did not allow the detection of gender differences in relationship satisfaction (Fowers, 1991). For example, the lack of significant gender differences in previous studies of relationship satisfaction may be due to the use of brief (often single-item) unidimensional measures of relationship satisfaction (Fowers, 1991). The practice of using single-item measures of relationship satisfaction has been criticised given that such measures account for less than 50% of the variance in longer, better validated measures (Donohue & Ryder, 1982; Spanier & Lewis, 1980). While the employment of a single item to assess relationship satisfaction has the advantage of convenience, its reliability cannot be assessed. Prior to 1991, Fowers (1991) found that only one study that did not find significant gender differences in marital satisfaction used a well-validated measure of marital satisfaction (see Schumm et al., 1985). “Given the generally poor quality of measurement, it is not surprising that these studies have not found differences in the way that men and women experience marriage” (Fowers, 1991, p. 211). Thus, the lack of findings pertaining to significant gender differences in relationship satisfaction could in some cases be an artifact of the use of single-item and/or low-quality measurement.

Some researchers argue that patterns of change in reported relationship satisfaction might be a product of different methods utilised by researchers (Whisman, 1997). It has been noted that a variety of instruments have been utilised to measure relationship satisfaction and perhaps differences in item content might partially explain the inconsistent results pertaining to the relationship between gender and relationship satisfaction (Shek, 1995). Whether such differential reports in relationship satisfaction

by gender are an artifact of measurement issues (female partners might evaluate relationships against different standards than their male counterparts; Schumm, Bollman & Jurich, 1997) or of the nature of IHR in society remains to be explored.

3.5 Demographic and Relationship Variables and Relationship Satisfaction

The main assumption of the demographic approach is that relationship satisfaction is associated with personal demographic variables, relationship demographic variables, and child-related variables (Raschke, 1987, cited in Kurdek, 1998). These variables are discussed in the following section:

Socio-economic status and relationship satisfaction

According to the demographic approach, persons who are young, not well-educated, and unemployed or poorly paid (personal demographic risk factors) may perceive few rewards from their IHR, perceive many costs to their IHR, and generate unattainable standards for their IHR because they are ill-equipped to perform relationship roles and because stressful changes are imminent in their IHR. Most international literature on relationship satisfaction and educational attainment indicates that, when a significant relationship is found between these two variables, the relationship is a positive one. In other words, the higher the educational attainment, the higher the relationship satisfaction (e.g., Lev-Wiesel & Al-Krenawi, 1999).

Researchers frequently find that low-income couples experience less relationship satisfaction than couples with higher income (e.g., Dakin & Wampler, 2008). Indeed, two recent state surveys in the United States reported that low-income persons were more likely to have low-quality, unsatisfying relationships (Karney, Garvan & Thomas, 2003; Johnson et al., 2002). Similarly, Rautenbach (1994) found income level to have a significant influence on the level of marital satisfaction in the South African context. Economic stress can include emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses that affect the IHR, for example, increased partner hostility and decreased partner warmth (Freeman, Carlson & Sperry, 1993).

Being poor or near poor brings with it a host of factors that place enormous stress on IHR: chronic shortage of money; accumulating debts; high rates of unemployment; low levels of literacy; substance abuse; incarceration; IPV; depression; poor housing; unsafe neighbourhoods (Ooms, 2002; Seefeldt & Smock, 2004). For instance, Dakin and Wampler (2008) found that low-income predicted less marital satisfaction. A demographic comparison of low- and middle-income couples revealed that low-income

couples had significantly less education and were less likely to have full-time employment. Both partners were less likely to have full-time employment. The low-income group was also younger in age and had not been in their IHR as long as the middle-income couples.

Recent research on the relationship dynamics of low-income couples indicates that certain issues may hinder satisfying IHR. For example, some unmarried parents set an “economic bar” as a precondition for marriage that may be unrealistically high (Dion, 2005). Low-income couples may also struggle with issues of trust, commitment, and fidelity (Gibson-Davis, Edin & McLanahan, 2005). The prevalence of trauma such as childhood sexual abuse may be higher among disadvantaged persons and may contribute to difficulty in forming satisfying IHR (Cherlin et al., 2003). Research has found that whether they are married or not, low-income couples frequently struggle with issues related to having children by multiple partners (Mincy, 2002). Compared with the general population, lower-income couples tend to be members of minorities and come from diverse cultural backgrounds (Fein, 2004).

Age and relationship satisfaction

A review of the recent literature reveals that a non-significant relationship is generally found between relationship satisfaction and age (e.g., Brezsnayak & Whisman, 2004; Imhonde, Aluede & Ifunanyachukwu, 2008). Similarly, in the South African context, Van Rooyen (1996) found that marital satisfaction did not vary significantly according to age. There has been little research on the link between age at cohabitation and the relationship satisfaction of cohabiting couples. Likewise, there has also been little recent research on age at marriage and marital satisfaction – the majority of research on age at marriage is conducted in relation to marital stability. One of the few studies conducted found a non-significant relationship between age at marriage and marital satisfaction (see Bahr, Chappell & Leigh, 1983).

Religiosity and relationship satisfaction

Researchers have consistently found religiosity to be associated with higher relationship satisfaction (e.g., Hünler & Gençöz, 2005). Religion influences relationship satisfaction directly by fostering a variety of relationship-related norms, values and social supports, which in turn promote greater investments in the IHR, discourage harmful behaviour to the IHR, and encourage partners to adopt a positive view of their IHR (Christiano, 2000; Wilcox, 2004). For instance, Mahoney et al. (1999) found marital satisfaction to be predicted by perceptions of the sacred qualities of one’s marriage.

A strong positive relationship between relationship satisfaction and church attendance has been well-documented in previous research (e.g., Dudley & Kosinski, 1990; Mahoney, Pargament, Murray-Swank & Murray-Swank, 2003; Wolfinger & Wilcox, 2008). The rituals associated with church attendance may heighten partners' sense of solidarity with one another and their commitment to pro-marriage norms (Durkheim, 1995; Mahoney et al., 2003), contributing to relationship satisfaction. Religious rituals may provide couples with meaning, strength, and direction in navigating the challenges and opportunities of couple life (Wolfinger & Wilcox, 2008).

Previous marriages and relationship satisfaction

According to the demographic approach outlined by Raschke (1987, cited in Kurdek, 1998) relationship demographic variables include factors such as previous marriages (i.e., divorce history). Individuals in IHR following divorce may have low thresholds for relational costs and high thresholds for relational rewards (Booth & Edwards, 1992). However, researchers typically find few differences in the marital satisfaction of couples in first marriages and those in remarriages (e.g., Coleman & Ganong, 1990; Kitson & Holmes, 1992).

Relationship status and relationship satisfaction

A substantial amount of recent research has found that cohabiting couples are significantly less satisfied with their IHR than married couples (e.g., Brown & Booth, 1996; Nock, 1995; Skinner, Bahr, Crane & Call, 2002). Researchers (e.g., Thomson & Colella, 1992) have argued that there is a selection effect into cohabitation, with couples that are less committed to their IHR or less confident in the success of their IHR being attracted to cohabitation. However, a study by Willets (2006) compared long-term cohabiting couples (cohabiting for a minimum of four years) with married couples and found a non-significant difference in relationship satisfaction.

Relationship duration and relationship satisfaction

Pertaining to relationship duration, longitudinal examination of marital duration across a number of studies reveals that marriages tend to become less satisfying with time (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). In other words, there is a negative relationship between these two variables. Consistent with Markman and Hahlweg (1993), in a longitudinal study Kurdek (1998) found that the marital satisfaction of husbands and wives decreased over the first six years of marriage. Contrary to international findings, Rudnick and Pretorius (1997) found a non-significant relationship between relationship satisfaction and relationship duration in the South African context.

Reason for marriage and relationship satisfaction

There has also been limited research on marital satisfaction and reason for marriage. A South African study by Ramphal (1991) found non-significant differences in the reasons for marriage between happily married women and unhappily married women.

Children and relationship satisfaction

Children feature prominently in how IHR are experienced by couples and a many studies have examined the link between relationship satisfaction and children (e.g., Cowan & Cowan, 1999). A recent meta-analysis by Twenge, Campbell and Foster (2003) found: parents to experience lower marital satisfaction compared to nonparents (also see Faulkner, Davey & Davey, 2005); a negative relationship between marital satisfaction and number of children (also see Willetts, 2006); the difference in marital satisfaction was most pronounced among mothers of infants (38% of mothers of infants had high marital satisfaction compared to 62% of childless women); the effect of parenthood on marital satisfaction was more negative among high socioeconomic groups, younger birth cohorts, and in more recent years. Results of the meta-analysis suggest that decreases in marital satisfaction following the birth of a child are due to role conflicts and restriction of freedom.

3.6 South African Research on Relationship Satisfaction

The volume of relationship literature from South African studies cannot be compared to that of international literature and, accordingly, South African researchers often draw on international relationship research. South African relationship research is still in its early years of development. A literature search on relationship satisfaction in South Africa revealed 57 studies since 1990 that have either focused on relationship satisfaction as the main variable or included relationship satisfaction as one of several variables.

3.6.1 Areas of Focus in South African Relationship Satisfaction Research

Individual traits and behaviours

South African research has investigated the link between mental health and relationship satisfaction (e.g., Young, 1992). Specifically, a number of researchers have assessed the relationship between postpartum depression and relationship satisfaction (e.g., Sheldon, 1992; Lacock, 1992; Spangenberg & Pieters, 1991). Certain aspects of physical health have also been focused on (e.g., Van der Poel & Greeff, 2003; Hofmeyr & Greeff, 2002). Other individual traits and behaviours explored in relation to

relationship satisfaction have been emotional intelligence (e.g., Bricker, 2005) and stress management strategies (e.g., Smith, 1994).

Couple interactional processes

Much research has explored the relationship between relationship processes and relationship satisfaction in the South African context. These include conflict management style (e.g., Greeff & De Bruyne, 2000), intimacy (e.g., Greeff & Malherbe, 2001; Steyn, 1992), communication (e.g., Hofmeyr & Greeff, 2002; Steyn, 1992), and self-disclosure (e.g., Greeff & Le Roux, 1998). The interactions of partners' variables have been investigated in relation to relationship satisfaction. Such variables include couple attachment style groupings (e.g., Naude, 1996), sex-role identity types (Prinsloo, 2004), and lovestyles (Rudnick & Pretorius, 1997). Relationship satisfaction has also been linked with contentment with the use of leisure time (e.g., Viljoen & Greeff, 2002), sexual satisfaction (e.g., Gous, 2001; Hofmeyr & Greeff, 2002), IPV (Singh, 2003), and power in IHR (Small & Mynhardt, 1998).

Background and contextual factors

A number of studies have examined relationship satisfaction within the family functioning context (e.g., Barkema, 1990; Greeff, 2000; Lowe, 2006). For example, Groenewald (2006) examined the relationship between the level of marital satisfaction of married couples in their middle adult years and their family-of-origin factors. Researchers have also studied the interplay between work and relationship satisfaction (e.g., Froneman, 1991; Narayan 2005; Van Rooyen, 1996), and variables such as stressors (e.g., Rautenbach, 1994) and social support (e.g., Pretorius, 1997).

Applied research

Research has also been conducted in order to inform practice, in other words, applied research like marital preparation (e.g., Duncan, 2000), marital accompaniment (e.g., Alpaslan, 1991; Babedi, 2003), and marital enrichment programmes (e.g., Language, 1998; Prinsloo, 2005). These studies have used relationship or marital satisfaction as a marker to assess how effective the programmes were.

3.6.2 Participants in South African Relationship Satisfaction Research

Similar to international research, most participants in South African research on relationship satisfaction have been married adults (e.g., Gous, 2001; Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997; Naude, 1996; Smith, 1994; Steyn, 1992; Van der Poel & Greeff, 2003; Viljoen & Greeff, 2002). Very few studies

included unmarried participants (e.g., Prinsloo, 2004) and only one study included dating adolescents (see De Villiers, 2006).

The diversity of the South African population has not been well represented, as most studies have sampled White participants (e.g., Prinsloo, 2004; Rudnick & Pretorius, 1997; Spangenberg & Pieters, 1991; Wiggins, 1994). Exceptions include Greeff and De Bruyne (2000), Lacock (1992), Radebe (1994), and Sithole (1992), who sampled Black participants. In a mixed representation, De Villiers (2006) sampled White, Black, and 'Coloured' participants, comparing them in terms of relationship satisfaction.

The majority of studies include participants that are described as middle-class (e.g., Bricker, 2005; Groenewald, 2006; Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997; Small & Mynhardt, 1998; Wiggins, 1994; Young, 1992), with very few including participants of lower SES (e.g., Greeff & De Bruyne, 2000; MacDonald, 1993). Generally, relationship satisfaction research in South Africa has been conducted on urban populations (e.g., De Villiers, 2006; Greeff & Malherbe, 2001; Prinsloo, 2004; Rudnick & Pretorius, 1997; Sithole, 1992), and to a lesser extent, on suburban populations (e.g., Greeff & De Bruyne, 2000; Prinsloo & Prinsloo, 2004). Only one study was found that included participants from rural areas (as well as urban areas; Spangenberg & Pieters, 1991).

However, contrary to international research, more often than not, South African research on relationship satisfaction has sampled couples (e.g., Greeff & Malherbe, 2001; Möller & Van Zyl, 1991; Steyn, 1992; Viljoen & Greeff, 2002; Wiggins, 1994) rather than individuals (e.g., Froneman, 1991; Lowe, 2006; Narayan, 2005; Ramphal, 1991).

3.6.3 Methodologies in South African Relationship Satisfaction Research

The majority of South African research on relationship satisfaction has employed quantitative methodology. Most studies have been correlational and cross-sectional in nature, and have used self-report questionnaires to collect data (e.g., Bricker, 2005; Gous, 2001; Greeff & Malherbe, 2001; Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997; Naude, 1996; Pretorius, 1997; Prinsloo, 2004; Rudnick & Pretorius, 1997; Smith, 1994). However, in some cases quasi-experimental or experimental designs have been used (e.g., Hofmeyr & Greeff, 2002; Van der Poel & Greeff, 2003).

There have been a number of self-report questionnaires used to measure relationship satisfaction in the South African context, including:

- Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS: Spanier, 1976; e.g., Basson, 1992; Dinna, 2005; Lambrecht, 1993; Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997; Möller & Van Zyl, 1991; Pretorius, 1997; Prinsloo, 2004; Prinsloo, 2005; Rudnick & Pretorius, 1997; Small & Mynhardt, 1998; Smith, 1994) and Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS: Busby, Crane, Larson & Christiansen, 1995; e.g., Gous, 2001);
- ENRICH marital satisfaction subscale (Olson et al., 1985; e.g., Greeff, 2000; Greeff & De Bruyne, 2000; Greeff & Malherbe, 2001; Hofmeyr & Greeff, 2002; Van der Poel & Greeff, 2003; Viljoen & Greeff, 2002);
- Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS: Cheung & Hudson, 1982; e.g., Emanuel, 1992; Prinsloo & Prinsloo, 2004; Wiggins, 1994);
- Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS: Schumm et al., 1986; e.g., Dinna, 2005; Prinsloo & Prinsloo, 2004);
- Marital Adjustment Test (MAT: Locke & Wallace, 1959; e.g., Groenewald, 2006; Young, 1992);
- Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R: Snyder, 1997; e.g., Bricker, 2005);
- Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ: Lazarus, 1985; e.g., Barkema, 1990; De Villiers, 1990; Spangenberg & Pieters, 1991);
- Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS: Roach, Frazier & Bowden, 1981; e.g., Greeff & Le Roux, 1998);
- Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS: Hendrick, 1988; e.g., De Villiers, 2006);

Only a handful of relationship satisfaction studies have employed either qualitative methodology (e.g., Marais, 2003; Radebe, 1994) or combined quantitative and qualitative methodology (e.g., Prinsloo, 2002; Prinsloo & Prinsloo, 2004; Small & Mynhardt, 1998). Data collection using qualitative methodology has included observation, interviews, and focus groups (e.g., Prinsloo & Prinsloo, 2004).

3.6.4 Findings from South African Relationship Satisfaction Research

Levels of relationship satisfaction

Similar to international trends, levels of relationship satisfaction in South African community samples have generally been found to be satisfactory (on average) and have been reported in a number of

different contexts (e.g., Alpaslan, 1991; De Beer, 1990; Wiggins, 1994), albeit usually with middle-class participants. An explanation of why couples are generally found to be satisfied with their IHR includes fewer barriers to leaving the relationship. Because divorce removes unsatisfied couples from the married population, existing marriages may be of a higher quality now than in the past. Furthermore, increases in married women's employment, income, and education have raised women's status and provided wives with greater decision-making power, thereby increasing the potential for less patriarchal and more egalitarian marital relationships (Amato, Johnson, Booth & Rogers, 2003). This may be the case for Western middle and high SES women, but less so for many women in the South African context (e.g., Shefer et al., 2008) whose access to employment, income, and education is still limited to varying degrees (e.g., Kritzinga & Vorster, 1998).

Gender and relationship satisfaction

Existing studies of gender differences in relationship satisfaction have largely been conducted in Western societies and there have been few attempts to date to examine this issue in the South African context. In most cases, the relationship between relationship satisfaction and gender was found to be non-significant (e.g., Greeff & Le Roux, 1998; Greeff & Malherbe, 2001; Mathews, 2003; Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997; Möller & Van Zyl, 1991; Rudnick & Pretorius, 1997), with only a few exceptions (e.g., Marr, 1985; Radebe, 1994). Interestingly, Dinna (2005) found non-significant gender differences for couples in arranged marriages. Pertaining to the above findings, the potential gender difference in relationship satisfaction was frequently not a specific objective of the study (with the exception of: Greeff & Le Roux, 1998; Mathews, 2003). Thus, the role of gender in relationship satisfaction has rarely been *explicitly* investigated in South African research. From the cross-cultural perspective, the lack of related South African research data would motivate one to ask whether gender differences in relationship satisfaction would also exist in South African contexts, and whether such differences would be similar to those observed in Western culture.

3.7 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, recent international research on relationship satisfaction and interpersonal processes, and on relationship satisfaction and various contexts, has been reviewed. The complicated relationship between gender and relationship satisfaction has been discussed, and potential explanations for inconsistencies in findings regarding this relationship have been offered. Recent research (both international and South Africa) on the link between relationship satisfaction and demographic and relationship variables has been reviewed, with a particularly in-depth look at SES.

Although marital satisfaction is one of the most commonly researched areas in South African relationship research (Conradie, 2006), the field is in its early stages. Participants in relationship satisfaction research in South Africa are most frequently married, White, middle-class, and living in urban areas. In consideration of this, the sample in the present study offers a number of advantages in that it includes 'Coloured', low-income, semi-rural, and both married and unmarried participants. Participants in South African research have generally been found to be satisfied with their IHR, however, samples have not been representative of different South African populations (e.g., non-White, low SES). Furthermore, gender differences in relationship satisfaction are often not explicit objectives in research. It is argued that the present study contributes new information to the relationship satisfaction field in South Africa in the contexts of 'race', SES, and gender.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD OF RESEARCH

4.1 Objectives of the Present Study

Primary research objective

The primary research objective was to explore the relationship satisfaction of heterosexual couples in committed intimate relationships in one low-income, semi-rural Western Cape community. Because of the lack of research (and specifically the lack of relationship research) in such communities, and hence the exploratory nature of the present study, no predictions were made prior to data collection.

Specific research objectives

Specific research objectives included exploring the levels of relationship satisfaction of couples and examining potential gender differences in these data. Additional objectives included the investigation of the relationships between relationship satisfaction and demographic and relationship variables. Demographic variables included: age, educational attainment, religious status (and partner's perception of), church affiliation, church attendance, employment, income, and sharing of bedroom and bed at night. Relationship variables included: relationship status (type of relationship), relationship duration, age at commencement of current relationship status, previous marriages, number of significant relationships in one's lifetime, reason for marriage (married couples) or for marriage in the future (unmarried couples), and children-related variables.

Secondary research objectives

There were two secondary research objectives in the present study: firstly, to explore the reliability of the relationship satisfaction measures in order to evaluate their appropriateness for the specific sample studied; and second, to investigate the convergent validity of the three relationship satisfaction measures. Convergent validity was also computed in order to evaluate the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale's (of the DAS) performance as an independent measure of relationship satisfaction.

4.2 Research Design

Little research has been conducted on IHR in semi-rural Western Cape communities and, specifically, no studies on the community in question could be identified. The present study adopted a cross-sectional quantitative survey-type approach because the main goal of a survey is "to learn about the ideas, knowledge, feeling, opinions, attitudes, and self-reported behaviour of a defined population"

(Graziano & Raulin, 2004, p. 310). A survey, therefore, provided an exploration of a wide range of possible trends within the experience of relationship satisfaction.

4.3 Sampling

Considering that some of the research objectives (and consequently, analyses) proposed relied on the inclusion of a diverse range of couples in the data collection, and bearing in mind that survey research strives for as representative a sample as possible (Mouton, 2001), the present study aimed to collect data from between 70 and 100 couples.

Stratified random sample

In stratified random sampling, separate random samples are drawn from each of several subpopulations or strata (Graziano & Raulin, 2004). This procedure is used when it is important to ensure that subgroups within a population are adequately represented in the sample. The research community is a semi-rural, low-income Western Cape farming community, made up loosely of farms, with a centralised semi-formal settlement. Thus, residents of this community reside either on the farms or in the semi-formal settlement. Stratified random sampling was utilised to ensure that the subpopulations in the community were adequately represented in the sample. The total population of the community is estimated to be approximately 3 500 (Census, 1999, quoted in Winelands District Council & Dennis Moss Partnership Inc., 2001), with about 236 people of the 3 500 living in the semi-formal settlement. Therefore, the semi-formal settlement makes up roughly 7% of the community's population. From this it is possible to calculate that if 100 couples are sampled, and if the informal settlement comprises approximately 7% of the community's population, 7 of the 100 couples interviewed should be drawn from the semi-formal settlement.

A list of farm owners in the community was compiled in 2001 by the relevant municipality at the time in conjunction with a local property development company. The list was then revised in 2007 with the assistance of the current municipality responsible for the community in question. This list of farms was arranged into a random order by a statistical consultant. A list of households in the semi-formal settlement was provided by a key roleplayer (minister) in the community who retains various records relating to community affairs. He is a resident of the semi-formal settlement and knows who lives in the settlement and where about in the settlement they live. As with the list of farms, the list of households in the semi-formal settlement was arranged into a random order by a statistical consultant.

4.4 Participants

Much relationship research has focused on the individual as their unit of analysis (Charania & Ickes, 2006; Conradie, 2006). However, this neglects the other partner's perspective of the relationship. Individual partners can often provide valuable information about their own experiences in the relationship, but the relative lack of data from both partners restrict what this research can tell us about relationships. To redress this imbalance, the present study used couples as its unit of analysis, so that both partner's perspectives as well as gender differences with regard to relationship satisfaction could be investigated. Furthermore, the vast majority of relationship research has been conducted with married couples (Conradie, 2006; Kline, Pleasant, Whitton & Markman, 2006). In light of this and of the trend of marital decline in favour of cohabitation in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2006), both married couples and unmarried couples were considered for inclusion in the present study. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the majority of participants in relationship research in South Africa have been White, middle-class individuals living in urban areas. The community under study is a predominantly low-income 'Coloured' population living in a semi-rural area.

The inclusion criteria for participants were a minimum age of 18 years where partners identified themselves as being in a committed IHR. As we had limited information on the nature of committed IHR in this community and the purpose was to explore a wide range of relationship forms, a minimum relationship duration or a maximum age for participation in the study was not included.

Of the 100 heterosexual couples randomly sampled for inclusion in the study, data from 93 full couples (i.e., where interviews were conducted with both partners) were used in statistical analyses ($n = 93$), as the second partner in 7 of the couples could not be interviewed. The sample was, thus, representative of the subpopulations in the community, as roughly 7% of the sample was drawn from the semi-formal settlement: 87 couples were drawn from the farms (93.3% of the total community population) and 6 couples were drawn from the semi-formal settlement (6.5% of the total community population).

4.5 Measuring Instruments

4.5.1 Demographic and Relationship Information

The demographic and relationship history questionnaire comprised of 67 items relating to biographical information, living conditions, financial status, and relationship characteristics such as relationship status, relationship duration, relationships history, and number of children, among others (see Addendum A).

4.5.2 Relationship Satisfaction

Defining relationship satisfaction as subjective, global evaluations of the relationship offers numerous advantages and was the approach adopted for the present study. Relationship satisfaction was measured using the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale of the DAS (referred to from this point onwards as the DSS; Spanier, 1976), the Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS; Cheung & Hudson, 1982), and the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS; Schumm et al., 1986). All measures were administered by means of paper-and-pencil.

4.5.2.1 DSS

Nature and development The DAS is one of the most widely used measures of marital quality/adjustment and, unlike other frequently used measures (e.g., Marital Adjustment Test: Locke & Wallace, 1959), its items allow for more contemporary relationships, such as unmarried or same-sex couples. Consequently, it has been treated to a great deal of methodological and conceptual critique. The instrument was developed with the assumption that relationship adjustment/quality is multidimensional (Spanier, 1976). Several authors (e.g., Eddy, Heyman & Weiss, 1991; Kurdek, 1992) argue that relationship satisfaction should be tapped by measures that provide overall global assessments so that assessments of relationship satisfaction do not overlap with assessments of the correlates or determinants of relationship satisfaction. Indeed, “if the DAS is to be used, it may be better to use the subscores separately for different purposes” (Kurdek, 1992, p.35). In keeping with the approach of relationship satisfaction as subjective, global evaluations of the relationship, and in an attempt to avoid the complications that arise in the overlap between the constructs of relationship adjustment and relationship satisfaction, the present study utilised only the DSS of the DAS.

The DSS contains 10 items rated on a 5-point (n=1), 6-point (n=8) or 7-point (n=1) Likert scale, with the majority of possible responses ranging from *all the time* and *every day*, respectively, to *never* (the range of total scores is zero to 50; see Addendum B). It includes items 16 to 23 and items 31 and 32 of the full DAS. Higher scores on the DSS indicate higher relationship satisfaction. A number of researchers have used the DSS rather than the full DAS (e.g., Hamamci, 2005). For example, Litzinger & Gordon (2005) did so in order to avoid conceptual overlap and to “provide a more pure assessment of marital satisfaction” (p. 415).

Reliability and validity The DSS is a psychometrically sound measure of satisfaction. Spanier (1976) reported the reliability of the DSS to be .94 and Carey, Spector, Lantinga and Krauss (1993)

reported it to be .87. Pertaining to convergent validity, the DSS has been correlated with a variety of theoretically related measures. Kurdek (1998) found correlations of .82 for husbands and .84 for wives between the DSS and the KMSS, a widely used measure of relationship satisfaction. Hunsley, Pinsent, Lefebvre, James-Tanner and Vito (1995) also found these correlations to be acceptable, namely .76 for male partners and .77 for female partners. Furthermore, Kurdek (1992) found the 4-year stability, construct validity, and predictive validity of the DSS to be acceptable for use with heterosexual couples.

Critique Similar to international research, the full DAS has been used in South Africa to measure both relationship satisfaction (e.g., Dinna, 2005; Prinsloo, 2004) and relationship adjustment (e.g., Basson, 1992; Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997; Van Zyl, 1990). However, Hunsley et al. (1995) found there to be substantial evidence that the DAS measures a higher order construct typically defined as relationship adjustment, whereas the DSS, although it can be adequately used as a short form substitute for the DAS, measures relationship satisfaction rather than adjustment. Similarly, Eddy et al. (1991) tested whether the DAS is a measure of unidimensional satisfaction or a measure of multidimensional adjustment. They provide evidence to suggest that the multidimensional adjustment model fit the data better than the 1-factor satisfaction model. Such findings highlight the inappropriateness of using satisfaction and adjustment as synonyms.

Appropriateness for different contexts An advantage of the full DAS, and consequently of the DSS, is that it has been translated into several languages for use with various nationalities and cultural groups (e.g., Hamamci, 2005; Roizblatt et al., 1999; Shek, 1993). For example, findings by Shek (1995b) in China generally supported the universality of the concept of dyadic adjustment as indexed by the DAS. Likewise, Shek and Cheung (2007) found that, although some minor refinement might be needed, the dimensions of marital adjustment assessed by the DAS could be replicated in the Chinese culture. Of the standardised relationship satisfaction measures utilised within the South African context, the full DAS is one of the more commonly chosen measures (e.g., Möller & Van der Merwe, 1997) and it appears to be appropriate for South African settings (e.g., Dinna, 2005; Prinsloo, 2004). The present study is novel in the South African context in that it uses the DSS only and not the full DAS in measuring relationship satisfaction.

4.5.2.2 IMS

Nature and development

The IMS is a comprehensive 25-item questionnaire. In the present study, the most commonly used 5-point response scale was utilised for the IMS including: *never, very little, sometimes, most of the time* and *always* (the range of total scores is zero to 100; see Addendum C). Higher scores on the IMS indicate a greater magnitude or severity of problems in the relationship, in other words, lower relationship satisfaction. Scores below 30 on the IMS indicate satisfaction with the relationship. The IMS respondents who participated in the development of this instrument included a range of different individuals such as single and married individuals, clinical and non-clinical populations, high school and college students and non-students (cited in Touliatos, Perlmutter & Straus, 2001). This instrument does not characterise the relationship as a unitary entity but measures the extent to which one partner perceives problems in the relationship (Touliatos et al., 2001). It does not measure marital adjustment since a couple may have arrived at a good adjustment despite having a high degree of discord or dissatisfaction (Touliatos et al., 2001). The original IMS was revised so that it could also be used with unmarried partners (Cheung & Hudson, 1982).

Reliability and validity

The IMS has exceptional reliability and validity (cited in Touliatos et al., 2001): It has a mean alpha of .96, indicating excellent internal consistency, and an excellent (low) Standard Error of Measurement of four. It also has exceptional short-term stability with a two-hour test-retest correlation of .96. The IMS has outstanding convergent validity, as well as very good known-groups validity and good construct validity. In a revalidation of findings, Cheung and Hudson (1982) strongly recommend the IMS for use in both research and in clinical applications on the basis that it appears to have very high reliability and validity coefficients, as estimated through several different methods.

Appropriateness for different contexts

The IMS has been used successfully in a wide variety of contexts. In the United States it has been used with different populations, for example, Korean immigrants (e.g., Chang & Moon, 1998) and Chinese immigrants (e.g., Jin, Eagle & Yoshioka, 2007). The IMS has also been successfully applied in countries other than the United States, for example, Israel (e.g., Rena, Moshe & Abraham, 1996), Nigeria (e.g., Adewuya, Ologun & Ibigbami, 2006), China (e.g., Lee et al., 2004), and Portugal (e.g., Cotrim, 2006). Although there appears to be only a handful of studies that have used the IMS to measure relationship satisfaction within the South African context (e.g., Emanuel, 1992; Wiggins, 1994), these studies suggest that the IMS is appropriate for local use.

4.5.2.3 KMSS

Nature and development In contrast to the lengthier IMS, the KMSS is a brief three-item measure of relationship satisfaction that is most often used with a 7-point Likert scale, with possible responses ranging from *extremely dissatisfied* to *extremely satisfied* (see Addendum D). The range of total scores is three to 21, with higher scores on the KMSS indicating higher relationship satisfaction. Scores of approximately 18 are typical for the scale's mean for intact, non-distressed couples (Schumm, Bollman & Jurich, 2000). The mean scores for distressed couples have been found to be significantly lower. Crane, Middleton and Bean (2000) determined the cutoff score of the KMSS to be 17. The KMSS offers promise for use in survey research and clinical evaluation where a brief but reliable measure of marital or relationship satisfaction is required. Bradury (1995) mentioned the KMSS as providing "simple, unconfounded assessment of how spouses feel about their relationship" (p.462).

The items of the KMSS were modified to make the scale applicable to non-married couples (Hunsley et al., 1995) and the following items were used in the present study (as both married and non-married couples were interviewed):

- a. How satisfied are you with your relationship?
- b. How satisfied are you with your partner in his/her role as your partner?
- c. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your partner?

In keeping with the attempted distinction between relationship satisfaction and relationship adjustment (the latter typically viewed as a more comprehensive, higher-order construct, e.g., Hunsley et al., 1995), the objective of the KMSS is to measure one dimension of relationship quality, namely satisfaction (Schumm et al., 2000). In addition, it is utilised as a measure of global relationship satisfaction (e.g., Kurdek, 1994).

Reliability and validity Research with the KMSS has repeatedly shown its internal consistency to be greater than .90 and it to be a sound measure of relationship satisfaction possessing convergent, criterion-related, and construct validity (e.g., Schumm et al., 2000). The KMSS has been correlated with a variety of theoretically related measures, for example, Herman (1991) found a correlation of .80 between the KMSS and the Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (Lazarus, 1985), suggesting good convergent validity. Likewise, Calahan (1997) found a correlation of .93 between the KMSS and the

Quality Marriage Index (Norton, 1983), suggesting that the two scales measure similar information (i.e., good convergent validity).

Critique Viewed critically, one could argue that the high reliability of the KMSS is only an artifact of using three questions worded so similarly (Schumm, Scanlon, Crow, Green & Buckler, 1983). However, it must be kept in mind that the items were intended to assess three distinct elements of global marital evaluation (Schumm et al., 2000) as suggested by Spanier and Cole (1976): (i) satisfaction with marriage as an institution, (ii) with husband or wife as a spouse (implicitly in terms of fulfillment of individual spousal responsibilities or duties), and (iii) with the marital relationship (implicitly in terms of factors such as intimacy or quality of communication). The pattern of differences between item means suggests that respondents do interpret the items differently, however, the three items proved to have adequate reliability to be treated as a scale (Schumm et al., 2000). Based on the existing reliability and validity data, Schumm et al. (1986) conclude that the KMSS “seems to be able to assess one dimension of marital quality (satisfaction) with enough items to estimate internal consistency reliability while not requiring the space required for longer scales” (p. 385).

Whereas a number of researchers have developed lengthy measuring instruments to evaluate different dimensions of the marital relationship (e.g., Marital Satisfaction Inventory: Snyder, 1997), some have contended that such lengthy measures might not practically be utilised in research as well as practice settings, and scales with few items have been developed. Current marital satisfaction scales usually vary in length from 15 to 50 items, yet offer the clinician and researcher with overall reliabilities no higher than those estimated for the KMSS (Schumm, Scanlon, et al., 1983). Furthermore, it appears that the KMSS is no more correlated with individual or marital social desirability than the other measures (Schumm, Scanlon, et al., 1983). Therefore, in several characteristics, the KMSS yields an equivalent performance with a great deal less items, a substantial reduction in length, an advantage of no small importance in clinical evaluation or much research where space for measures is quite limited (Schumm, Scanlon, et al., 1983).

Appropriateness for different contexts The KMSS has been used successfully in a wide variety of contexts. In the United States it has been used with different populations, for example, Caucasian and African American groups (Green, Woody, Maxwell, Mercer & Williams, 1998), with strikingly similar results, supporting the validity and reliability of the scale. The KMSS has also been successfully applied in countries other than the United States, for example, China (Fong & Lam, 2007; Shek, 1998)

and Korea (Chung, 2004). There has been very little research using the KMSS with South African populations. One example is Dinna (2005) who used the KMSS (as well as the full DAS) to explore the marital satisfaction of couples of arranged marriages and autonomous marriages in a South African Indian sample.

4.5.3 Measurement Considerations

Care was taken beforehand in the translation and adjustment of the language and response formats of measures to ensure that measures were appropriate for use with an Afrikaans-speaking, low-income, low scholastic achievement sample that included both married and unmarried couples. In order to test the measures and individual items for understanding and appropriateness, a pilot study of the measures was conducted with two couples prior to the main data collection in order to test the measures and individual items for understanding and appropriateness. An additional pilot study included the IMS, which was on this occasion tested with six couples. Feedback from the pilot suggested that the measures would be appropriate for use with this particular population.

4.6 Fieldworkers

All the fieldworkers were female, with an average age of 22.5 years. Of the 13 fieldworkers, four were 'Coloured' and nine were White. All fieldworkers were graduate psychology students, except for one fieldworker who was an undergraduate journalism student. Nine had graduated with a Bachelor of Psychology degree (4-year counselling degree, including Honours), three of whom were completing their Masters in Psychology by Thesis at the time of the survey. The remaining three fieldworkers were Honours in Psychology students. Prior to data collection field workers were trained in interviewing skills and in administering the items of the questionnaires (item-by-item training). Their competency was assessed by the use of role-plays which were observed by the project's research partners.

4.7 Procedure

Farms were approached according to the random order of the list of farms, starting with the first farm and moving through the list until 93 of the 100 couples had been interviewed (7 couples were interviewed in the semi-formal settlement). Contact was established with the relevant farm owners in order to gain permission to access participants who lived and/or worked on the farm (prior to obtaining informed consent from the participants themselves). It had already been established that farm owners were generally able to identify participants working and/or living on their farms who were involved in a relationship. Furthermore, once permission had been granted by the farm owners to approach persons

living and working on their property, all such people were asked whether they were currently in a committed IHR. The majority of farm owners cooperated with the survey and played an active role in helping to arrange interview times and venues. In these cases, appointment times for interviews with couples were established via farm owners or through contact details of couples forwarded by farm owners. A small number of farm owners preferred not to be involved in the survey, but granted us access to the farm so we could approach participants independently. In these cases, we enlisted key community role-players (e.g., community health workers) to assist in establishing contact with participants and arranging interviews.

Households in the semi-formal settlement were approached according to the random order of the list of households, starting with the first household and moving through the list until 7 of the 100 couples had been interviewed. Again, community role-players (e.g., a pastor) were enlisted to assist in establishing contact with participants and arranging interviews.

For the duration of the survey, fieldworkers were transported by the project to the outlying farms and semi-formal settlement. In a period of three weeks, fieldworkers interviewed partners separately in their homes or workplaces. Some participants from the semi-formal settlement were interviewed in a nearby church. If at home, partners were interviewed separately in different rooms of the house. If at work, venues for interviews included packing rooms, a church on one of the farms, function halls, storerooms, and outside on the grass – any comfortable place that could guarantee a confidential space. Where interviews were conducted during participants' lunch breaks, sandwiches and beverages were provided.

Fieldworkers began the contact session with a consent form (see section 4.9). Once informed consent for participation in the survey had been obtained, fieldworkers implemented the demographic and relationship questionnaire, followed by the three relationship satisfaction questionnaires. Fieldworkers read both the consent form and questionnaire items aloud to the participants (in case of low literacy), but sat next to participants so that the participants could also read the items themselves. At the end of the interview, each participant was thanked and received a R20 voucher as a token of appreciation for their participation in the study. As interviews with participants were completed, each couple was given a numerical code, so that partners in each couple were matched.

4.8 Data Analysis

Demographic and relationship information was computed for both the total sample and separately for each gender so as to explore gender differences. To address the primary research question regarding how satisfied participants were with their IHR, descriptive statistics were computed by gender for the DSS, IMS, and KMSS. Pertaining to the potential gender difference in relationship satisfaction, repeated measures ANOVA was used in order to determine whether this difference was significant.

Reliability analyses were conducted on the three relationship satisfaction questionnaires (Cronbach alphas for the DSS and the KMSS, and the split-half reliability for the IMS). In order to investigate the relationships between the relationship satisfaction measures, Spearman correlations were computed as an indication of convergent validity.

Spearman correlations between relationship satisfaction and demographic and relationship variables were computed to establish whether there were significant relationships between these variables. The sample was also divided into groups on the basis of demographic and relationship variables and ANOVAs were used to determine whether these groups differed significantly in terms of relationship satisfaction. Since it is likely that men's and women's demographic and relationship variables may operate differently for men and women in IHR (Whisman, 1997), separate analyses were computed for each gender. Gender differences in IHR can manifest in at least two ways (Karney & Bradbury, 1995): A single variable can influence male and female partners differently, or male and female partners' variables can influence the IHR differently. For instance, male partners can be affected by their own backgrounds differently than female partners are affected by their own backgrounds, or male partners' backgrounds can affect both partners differently than female partners' backgrounds affect both partners (e.g., Baucom, Notarius, Burnett & Haefner, 1990). Such a procedure is consistent with Bernard's (1972) assertion that it is necessary to talk about two different marriages of any couple: "his" and "hers". Couples formed the unit of analysis in the present study and all couples were heterosexual with genders split evenly in both groups.

Scores on the DSS (rather than the IMS or KMSS scores) were used as the relationship satisfaction scores in the statistical analyses between relationship satisfaction and demographic and relationship variables respectively. The DSS was chosen because the DAS (which includes the DSS) is the more frequently used measure both internationally and in the South African context (as reported in Chapter 3 and the present chapter). Furthermore, in the present study, the DSS was shown to be a reliable

independent measure of relationship satisfaction and to have good convergent validity with the IMS (see section 5.3).

Standard assessments of magnitude of effect size were used (i.e., $r = 0.1$, small effect; $r = 0.3$, medium effect; $r = 0.5$, large effect: Field, 2005). For many of the analyses the sample was divided into smaller groups. At times, the sizes of some of these groups were not large enough to conduct analyses on (i.e., there were not enough data) or there was little statistical power to detect significant results. Statistical power is dependent on the size of groups (whether there is enough data in order to detect a significant effect assuming that this effect exists) and on the size of the effect.

4.9 Ethical Concerns

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant university's ethical committee. The following basic rights of participants were respected throughout the data collection process:

- The right to privacy, including the right to refuse to participate in research and the right to refuse to answer any question;
- The right to anonymity and confidentiality;
- The right to full disclosure about the research;
- The right not to be harmed in any manner, whether physically, psychologically or emotionally;
- The right for questionnaires to be administered in a language in which the participant is sufficiently proficient: All measuring instruments, namely the demographic and relationship questionnaire, DSS, IMS, and KMSS, were translated into Afrikaans, the first-language of the majority of people in the community.

There are also ethical concerns pertaining to the rights of “vulnerable” groups. Special action may be necessary where participants are illiterate, have low social status, or are unfamiliar with social research (Mouton, 2001). The population under study resides in a semi-rural Western Cape farming community where the majority of people have a primary school level of education (Statistics South Africa, 2003); where there are several poverty-related problems; and where little research has been previously conducted. In consideration of this, a detailed informed consent form was drawn up (see Addendum E). Participants were given the choice of reading the consent form themselves or of having the fieldworker read the consent form to them (in cases of low literacy of participants).

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Results are organised according to the following six sections: (5.1) Demographic Information; (5.2) Relationship Information; (5.3) Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Relationship Satisfaction Measures; (5.4) Relationship Satisfaction, including gender differences; (5.5) Demographic Variables and Relationship Satisfaction; and (5.6) Relationship Variables and Relationship Satisfaction. In sections 5.1 to 5.4, results are presented by variable and, at the end of the section, results are summarised and discussed. Although section 5.3 includes results of the secondary objectives of the present study, it is more appropriate to present this section first before turning to the relationship satisfaction results (section 5.4) on the basis that section 5.3 reports on the psychometric results of the relationship satisfaction measures. In sections 5.5 and 5.6 significant results are presented and discussed, followed by the presentation of non-significant results. Throughout the presentation of results, tabulations and statistical graphs are utilised where appropriate.

5.1 Demographic Information

Descriptive statistics are used to present the demographic information of participants. Some general demographic information is summarised in Table 5.1. Please note that for the following demographic variables only women's reports were used because of duplication of data: number of children in the household, room and bed sharing at night, frequency of joint church attendance, and household monthly income. Women's reports rather than men's reports were used on the basis that they may be more reliable. Although the author is unable to motivate this position with research findings, other South African researchers tend to use women's, rather than men's, reports (e.g., Ramphal, 1991). The discrepancy between partners' reports of these variables in the present sample was in any case small.

5.1.1 Age, Language, and Race

The mean age of the total sample was 43.6 ($SD = 26.41$) with a range of 19 to 70. The mean age of men was 45.0 ($SD = 25.0$) with a range of 25 to 70 and the mean age of women was 42.17 ($SD = 25.83$) with a range of 19 to 68. The home language of 98% of participants was Afrikaans ($n = 183$), with the remaining 2% either isiXhosa ($n = 2$) or English ($n = 1$). This finding is in line with observations suggesting a primarily Afrikaans community. Within the sample 94% identified themselves as 'Coloured' ($n = 165$), 3% as 'Black' ($n = 6$), and 2% as 'Other' ($n = 4$).

Table 5.1

Summary of General Demographic Information

		Women	Men	Total sample
Age (years)	Mean	42.17	45.0	43.6
	(SD)	(25.83)	(25.0)	(26.41)
	Range	19-68	25-70	19-70
Language: Mother tongue	Afrikaans	91 (98%)	92 (99%)	183 (98%)
	isiXhosa	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
	English	1 (1%)	0	1 (1%)
Race	‘Coloured’	86 (97%)	79 (92%)	165 (94%)
	Black	1 (1%)	5 (6%)	6 (3%)
	Other	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)
Educational attainment (Grade)	Mode	6	7	6
Employment (Employed: Yes/No)	Yes	55 (59%)	78 (84%)	133 (72%)
	No	38 (41%)	15 (16%)	53 (28%)
Household income² (per month in Rands)	Mean			2,949.82
	(SD)			(6050.18)
	Range			490-9,000
Religious Status (Religious: Yes/No)	Yes	86 (93%)	83 (89%)	169 (91%)
	No	6 (7%)	10 (11%)	16 (9%)
Frequency of Church attendance (per month)	Mean	5.63	5.58	5.60
	(SD)	(24.37)	(6.09)	(24.40)
	Range	0-30	0-30	0-30

² Women’s reports of household monthly income were used, thus, the figure for women, men and total sample are the same.

5.1.2 Educational Attainment

Educational attainment was similar for men and women. See Figure 5.1 for the total sample's educational attainment ($n = 186$). At the extremes 15% of participants possessed no formal education at all ($n = 27$), and only 1 participant (female) obtained an educational level of matric certificate or higher (1%).

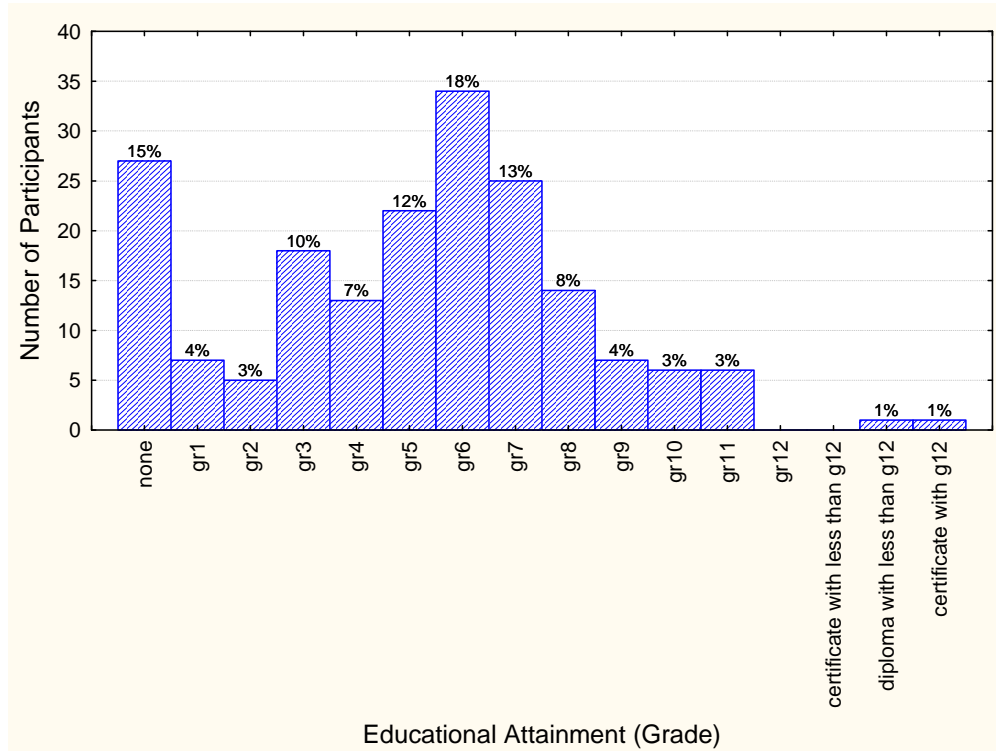


Figure 5.1. Educational attainment for total sample.

5.1.3 Employment

Employment rate

Overall, 72% of participants were currently employed ($n = 133$). However, there was a greater proportion of men than women employed, 84% of men ($n = 78$) compared to 59% of women ($n = 55$). Of the 93 couples, both partners in 47 of the couples were employed (51%). In 31 of the couples, the male partner only was employed (33%), in 8 of the couples the female partner only was employed (9%), and in 7 of the couples neither partner was employed (8%).

Work type

The breakdown of demographic information along gender lines revealed other important differences. For example, in the overall sample there were two most frequently reported occupation types, skilled labour³ ($n = 29$, 22%) and house-help/gardener⁴ ($n = 29$, 22%). However, when these findings were broken down on the basis of gender, skilled labour was found to be the most common occupation for men ($n = 28$, 36%), with only 9% of men performing house-help/gardener work ($n = 7$, 9%). The house-help/gardener type was the most common occupation for women ($n = 22$, 40%), with only 2% of women performing skilled labour ($n = 1$, 2%). Of the 29 participants who engaged in skilled labour, 28 were male and only 1 was female.

Seasonal nature of work

Of the participants who were employed at the time of the survey, 11% indicated that there were months in the year when they did not earn income ($n = 15$). Also, 17% of participants unemployed at the time of the survey indicated that there were months in the year when they did earn income ($n = 9$), again pointing to the seasonal nature of work in the community. According to this breakdown of figures, at the time of the survey there were 116 participants who were employed and who stay employed throughout the year (63%), 24 participants who may classify as seasonal workers (13%; 15 of whom were employed and 9 of whom were unemployed at the time of the survey), and 43 unemployed participants who remain unemployed throughout the year (24%). The majority of the sample's employment occurs on the wine and fruit farms that make up the community. The possible seasonal nature of some participants' employment in this community is most likely linked to the seasonal nature of the wine and fruit industries.

The gender breakdown of these data revealed that a greater proportion of women were seasonal workers while the majority of men enjoyed employment throughout the year. Only 45% of women were employed throughout the year ($n = 41$) compared to 82% of men ($n = 75$). There were 17 women who classified as seasonal workers (18%), more than twice the number of men who classified as seasonal workers ($n = 7$, 8%). Furthermore, the number of women unemployed throughout the year far exceeded the figure for men: 34 women (37%) compared to 9 men (10%).

³ Skilled labour included participant responses of driver, machine operator, builder, furniture installer, cooper, and boiler-operator (the latter two types are related to work in a distillery).

⁴ House-help/gardener included participant responses of char, child-minder, cleaner, ironing, waitron, dishwasher, kitchen work, and gardener.

5.1.4 Financial Status

Individual monthly income

Participants were earning on average R1,703.86 per month. When divided on the basis of gender, on average, men earned R1,887.73 per month and women earned R1,443.09.

Couple monthly income

The mean couple monthly income (i.e., the sum of the male and female partner's monthly income, excluding the income of other people in the household) was R2,635.03. There was a great deal of variance within the data for monthly couple income, indicated by the standard deviation of R7,804.97. Couple monthly income ranged from R220 to R10 440, however, the data is positively skewed which explains the mean of R2,949.82. In other words there is clustering in the lower income range, with only a small number of couples in the higher income range (see Figure 5.2).

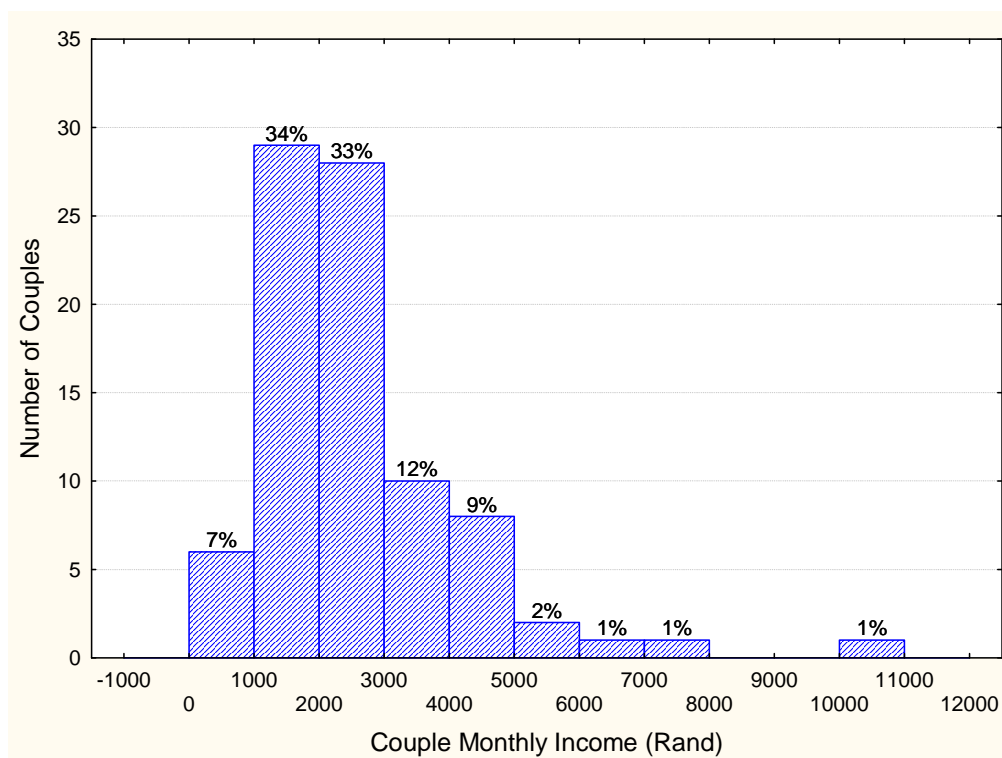


Figure 5.2. Couple monthly income.

Household monthly income

The mean household income per month was R2,949.82. This figure is similar to that of the couple monthly income because in most cases households were comprised of the couple and their children. As

with the couple monthly income, there was a great deal of variance within the monthly household income data, indicated by the standard deviation of R6,050.18. Again, there is a clustering in the lower income range, with only a small number of households in the higher income range.

Welfare assistance: Government grants

Government grants provide an important source of income in the community, evident in that approximately half the sample ($n = 91$, 49%) reported that at least one person in their household (including the participant) receives some type of grant, including pension, disability, foster, and child grants.

Medical aid

Pertaining to medical aid, the majority of the sample reported not belonging to a medical aid or medical plan, 88% ($n = 164$) compared to 12% ($n = 22$). These figures were similar for men and women.

5.1.5 Religiosity, Church affiliation, and Church attendance

Religiosity

Ninety-one percent of the sample indicated belonging to a religion (Christianity in all cases; $n = 169$), with minimal differences between men ($n = 83$, 89%) and women ($n = 86$, 93%). With regards to perception of partner's religious status, 91% of women ($n = 85$) identified their male partners as belonging to a religion (Christianity). Ninety-six percent of men ($n = 89$) identified their female partners as belonging to a religion (Christianity). Partners within couples were largely homogeneous in terms of religious status: In 83% of couples both partners identified themselves as Christian ($n = 77$), compared to 11% of couples where the female partner was Christian but the male partner did not belong to a religion ($n = 10$), and 6.6% of couples where the male partner was Christian but the female partner did not belong to a religion ($n = 6$). There were no couples in which neither partner belonged to a religion.

Church affiliation

The most commonly reported church affiliation was the Dutch Reformed Church ($n = 32$, 18%), followed in close succession by the Old Apostolic Church ($n = 22$, 13%), the Pentecostal Church ($n = 21$, 12%) and the Methodist Church ($n = 20$, 12%), with minimal differences between men and women. Because of the large number of different church affiliations, they were also assimilated into broader categories with the assistance of a consultant at the Department of Theology (University of

Stellenbosch) who had experience with similar work for the South African Census. Two main categories were used, namely Mainline Churches⁵ ($n = 96$) and Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches⁶ ($n = 56$), again with minimal differences between men and women.

Frequency of church attendance per month

The mean frequency of church attendance for participants was 5.6 occurrences per month, with a range of 0 to 30. There were no gender differences with regard to frequency of church attendance. The mean frequency of joint church attendance for partners was approximately 4 occurrences per month.

5.1.6 Household

Sharing of bedroom and bed at night

Twenty-nine percent of couples ($n = 27$) shared their *bedroom* with one or more *children* at night whereas 71% did not ($n = 66$). Fifteen percent of couples ($n = 14$) shared their *bed* with one or more *children* at night whereas 85% of couples did not ($n = 79$). *Partners* in 8% of couples ($n = 7$) did not share a *bed* at night whereas 92% did ($n = 86$).

Household composition

The median number of people living and sleeping in the house was 5 (including the participant) with a range of 2 to 13. However, most commonly the household was comprised of the couple and their children. The median number of children in the household was 3 with a range of 0 to 9. This included the couple's children, partners' children from previous relationships, extended family like grandchildren, foster children, godchildren, and children of persons boarding in the house. The median age (in years) of children in the household from oldest to youngest was: 17, 13, 10, 9.5, and 7. In other words the median of the oldest child in the household was 17, of the second oldest child in the household was 13, and so on. Descriptive statistics were only computed for up to five children, as there were only a small number of cases where there were more than five children in the household.

Head of household

The head of household was not based on any specific economic criteria but rather assessed general decision-making power and authority in the household. Only 8% of women indicated that they were

⁵ Mainline Churches included Dutch Reformed, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Roman Catholic Church, Old Apostolic, and Protestant.

⁶ Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches included the Fellowship of Christians, Apostolic Faith Mission of SA, Pentecostal Church, New Apostolic Church, and Evangelical Church

head of the household ($n = 7$), with the majority of women (84%) reporting that their male partner was head of the household ($n = 78$). Of the 8 remaining women, 7 cited various family members as the head of the household (8%) and 1 woman classified the head of the household as “other” (i.e., someone other than the woman, her partner, or family; 1%). This is generally in accordance with men’s reports of head of the household. Ninety percent of men indicated that they were head of the household ($n = 84$), with only 2% of men reporting that their female partner was head of the household ($n = 2$). Of the remaining 7 men, 6 cited various family members as the head of the household (6%) and 1 man reported that both he and his female partner were the head of the household (1%). In this particular participant’s case there was a discrepancy between partners’ reports as his female partner cited herself as the head of household. There was, however, generally agreement as to who the head of the household was, with a discrepancy for only a small number of couples.

5.1.7 Demographic Information: Summary and Discussion

The majority of the sample was Afrikaans-speaking and self-identified as ‘Coloured’. Most participants had attained only a primary school level of education and were earning and/or receiving limited monthly income. Given this finding, it is hardly surprising that government grants provide an important source of income in the community. The majority of participants identified as belonging to a religion (Christianity in all cases) and was generally of a regular church-going nature. Participants identified with a number of different church affiliations and no one church affiliation was dominant. Most commonly the household was comprised of the couple and their children, and in most cases the male partner was considered to be the head of household by both men and women.

In the sample 84% of men were employed compared to only 59% of women. This indicates the possibility that a large number of women are economically dependent on their male partners and, consequently, their potential vulnerability to economic or financial abuse as well as other types of abuse. Financial abuse has been found to be a common feature of IHR in the South African context (Jewkes et al., 1999). An important limitation of the questionnaire is that women who were unemployed were not asked whether unemployment was by choice (i.e., preference to stay at home) or whether they were unable to obtain employment.

The relationship between gender inequality and housework has been central to feminist theories of family relationships (Jackson, 2007). Given that housework is a personal service, governed by requirements of those for who it is performed (in particular men), it has no limits or boundaries, no

fixed hours and no job description (Jackson, 2007). In their domestic practices heterosexual couples are both ‘doing gender’ and ‘doing heterosexuality’ (VanEvery, 1995; Jackson, 1999), contributing to relationships in which women continue to be responsible for the daily maintenance of the bodily and social needs of their male partners and children. However, for this sample, exchanging domestic work for a man’s support may represent the woman’s best option for meeting her economic and social needs.

It is clear that theoretical understandings of work are gendered but what does this imply for the sample of the present study? In essence, experiences of paid and unpaid labour are qualitatively different for women and men. One can think about this experience in terms of (Irving, 2007):

- a. differences in the types and status of jobs that women and men do;
- b. differences in the financial rewards attached to women’s jobs and men’s jobs; and
- c. the impact of these occupational divisions on economic and household power relations.

Irving (2007) identifies the gendering of work in the public sphere as evolving from the pre-assigned roles in the private. This is especially evident in the assumptions regarding the types of skills and attributes required to perform particular types of paid work. Female workers have been assumed to be a qualitatively different kind of workforce, which is limited in skill and submissive in character. In the present sample 36% of men compared to only 2% of women performed skilled work. More skilled work types were more frequently occupied by men while less skilled work types were more frequently occupied by women. There was also a clear distinction between traditionally male occupations versus traditionally female occupations. The most common occupation for women in the sample was the “house-help” category, which included participant responses of char (domestic worker), child-minder, cleaner, ironing, waitron, dishwasher, and kitchen work. This finding is in agreement with previous research on low-income, semi/rural farms in the Western Cape by Kritzinger and Vorster (1996), who revealed that men dominated the higher paying skilled jobs of tractor driving, irrigation and supervision.

Feminised occupations are constructed as low skilled because the skills required are those that women are assumed to possess by nature rather than through recognised processes of acquisition (Irving, 2007). Consequently, feminised occupations have been devalued. The feminisation and masculinisation of particular types of work is referred to as ‘*occupational*’ or ‘*horizontal*’ segregation (Irving, 2007). In jobs which require physical presence, men form the majority of employees. In contrast, in caring, personal service and administrative jobs, women form the majority of employees. Thus, of the women

in the sample who did work, a great many of them performed paid work that mirrored their unpaid work in the home.

In low-paid, low-status, feminised occupations (e.g., service work such as cleaning), part-time and other forms of precarious employment are most prevalent (Fagan & Burchell, 2002). Flexible employment refers to jobs and conditions of employment variously characterised as ‘atypical’, ‘non-standard’ and ‘precarious’ (Irving, 2007). Feminised occupations are more likely to diverge from the male model of employment (Purcell, 1988) and women’s employment has been subject to greater reorganisation than that of men on the basis that women are regarded as a cheap, submissive, and secondary workforce, an ‘industrial reserve army’ (Irving, 2007). In the present sample a greater proportion of women were seasonal workers while the majority of men enjoyed employment throughout the year. There were 17 women who classified as seasonal workers (18%), more than twice the number of men who classified as seasonal workers ($n = 7$, 8%). This finding parallels that of Kritzinger and Vorster (1995, cited in Kritzinger & Vorster, 1998) who found that farm owners in the Western Cape used gender as a criterion for differentiating between temporary and permanent farm workers, resulting in female farm workers possessing only temporary employment status. The secondary status of women means that certain rights and employment benefits are withheld from them, for example, written contracts of employment.

Feminised occupations also include the lowest paid occupations and, consequently, the distribution of women and men across occupations has significant implications for the existence of a gender pay gap. Historically, men earn higher income than women (Impett & Peplau, 2006), even when they do engage in the same type of work (e.g., Meleis & Lindgren, 2002; Pyle, 1999). In the present sample, men earned on average R1,887 per month compared to women who earned R1,443 per month. Thus, the secondary status of women in the sample is also reflected in the income disparity between male and female farm workers. Similarly, Kritzinger and Vorster (1996) found that female farm workers in the Western Cape earned less per week than men and that, more often than not, female farm workers worked fewer weeks per year. Wage differentials between female and male farm workers also result from existing training practices in that male farm workers are much more likely than female farm workers to receive formal training (Kritzinger & Vorster, 1995, cited in Kritzinger & Vorster, 1998).

Where men earn more than their female partners, they potentially have more control over income (Jackson, 2007). Again, this points to an imbalance of power between men and women and to women’s

potential vulnerability to economic or financial abuse as well as other types of abuse. In most instances in the present sample, the male partner was identified as the head of household, with marginal discrepancy between men (90%) and women (84%). The female partner was identified as the head of household in only a few cases (8% of women and 2% of men). This finding indicates that women in the present sample experienced limited decision-making power in the household. Likewise, in low-income, semi-rural farms in the Western Cape, Kritzinger and Vorster (1995, cited in Kritzinger & Vorster, 1998) found the division of labour within farm worker family households to follow the traditional pattern with women taking responsibility for childcare and household tasks. Traditional conceptions of marriage lend support to the idea that the male partner should be the head of the household and have greater authority in making decisions and leading the family (e.g., Shefer et al., 2008).

5.2 Relationship Information

Descriptive statistics were used to present the relationship information of participants. Please note that for the following relationship variables only women's reports were used because of duplication of data: paternity of children in the household, and relationship duration. The use of women's reports has already been discussed in section 5.1.

5.2.1 Relationship Status

None of the participants in the sample reported being in more than 1 relationship, thus, the sample was monogamous. Regarding relationship status, 76% of the couples were married ($n = 71$), 20% were cohabiting ($n = 19$; unmarried but living together) and 3% were in a committed IHR ($n = 3$; unmarried and not cohabiting but in a committed IHR).

5.2.2 Relationship Duration

The mean relationship duration of the total sample's current relationship status was 16.95 years (i.e., almost 17 years). Relationship duration was also computed separately for each type of relationship status. For married couples relationship duration is equal to the duration of their marriage (does not include dating or cohabitation prior to marriage), for cohabiting couples relationship duration is equal to the duration of their cohabitation (does not include dating prior to cohabitation), and finally for couples in committed IHR, relationship duration is equal to the duration of their IHR. The mean relationship duration was 17.97 years ($SD = 11.3$) for married couples, 13.56 years ($SD = 8.84$) for cohabiting couples, and 13.0 years ($SD = 10.44$) for couples in IHR.

5.2.3 Age at Commencement of Current Relationship Status

The mean age at marriage for married women was 25.84 years ($SD = 6.10$) and the mean age at marriage for married men was 28.42 years ($SD = 7.54$). The mean age at cohabitation for cohabiting women was 23.83 years ($SD = 7.46$) and the mean age at cohabitation for cohabiting men was 27.66 years ($SD = 11.48$). The mean age at commencement of the IHR for women in committed IHR was 18.67 years ($SD = 6.03$) and the mean age at commencement of the IHR for men in committed IHR was 19.33 years ($SD = 0.58$).

5.2.4 Relationships History

The majority of participants did *not* have relationships of less than 1 year ($n = 111$, 63%), between 1 and 2 years ($n = 149$, 85%), between 2 and 3 years ($n = 163$, 93%), between 3 and 5 years ($n = 151$, 86%), or between 5 and 8 years ($n = 150$, 86%). However, 80% of the sample had 1 relationship lasting more than 8 years (most often their current relationship; $n = 141$). Only 14% had no relationships of this duration ($n = 24$) and only 6% had 2 relationships of this duration ($n = 11$). There were minimal differences between men and women (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3 for the breakdown of these data for men and women respectively).

Table 5.2

Number of Participants and Number of Relationships of Specified Durations: Men

	<u>0</u>		<u>1</u>		<u>2</u>		<u>3</u>		<u>4</u>		<u>5</u>		<u>6</u>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
< 1 year	53	60	12	13	8	9	6	7	3	3	5	6	2	2
1-2 years	77	87	9	10	2	2	1	1						
2-3 years	83	93	4	4	1	1	1	1						
3-5 years	75	84	13	15	1	1								
5-8 years	79	89	9	10	1	1								
> 8 years	11	12	73	81	6	7								

Table 5.3

Number of Participants and Number of Relationships of Specified Durations: Women

	<u>0</u>		<u>1</u>		<u>2</u>		<u>3</u>		<u>4</u>		<u>5</u>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
< 1 year	58	67	19	22	6	7	2	2			1	1
1-2 years	72	84	13	15	1	1						
2-3 years	80	93	6	7								
3-5 years	76	88	9	10					1	1		
5-8 years	71	83	13	15	2	2						
> 8 years	13	15	68	79	5	6						

5.2.5 Number of Significant Relationships

The majority of participants had 1 relationship they considered to be significant ($n = 119$, 65%). This finding was consistent for both men ($n = 60$, 65%) and women ($n = 59$, 65%). Twenty-four percent of the sample reported 2 important relationships during their lifetime ($n = 44$). See Table 5.4 for complete figures.

Table 5.4

Number of Significant Relationships With Intimate Partners in Participants' Lifetime

	<u>0</u>		<u>1</u>		<u>2</u>		<u>3</u>		<u>4</u>		<u>5</u>		<u>6</u>		<u>7</u>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Females	2	2	59	65	21	23	9	10								
Males			60	65	23	25			6	7			2	2	1	1
Total	2	1	119	65	44	24	9	5	6	3			2	1	1	1

5.2.6 Cohabitation History

In the sample 81% ($n = 148$) had cohabited with 1 partner during their lifetime, with 14% having cohabited with 2 partners during their lifetime ($n = 26$; these figures include their current partner). There were minimal differences between men and women.

5.2.7 Previous Marriages

Only 11 of the 186 participants (5.9%) had previous marriages, 6 of whom were women and 5 of whom were men. There was a range of 1 to 2 for number of previous marriages.

5.2.8 Reason for Marriage or for Marriage in the Future

As couples could report more than one reason, results are reported in terms of frequency counts of reason for marriage. Love was most frequently cited as the reason for marriage among married couples with similar rates for men and women. Of the 142 married participants there were 115 reported counts of love as a reason for marriage (55 women and 60 men), 26 for pregnancy (15 women and 11 men), 18 for religious reasons (7 women and 11 men), 15 for 'other'⁷ reasons (7 women and 8 men), and 1 for financial reasons (1 woman). Cohabiting couples and couples in committed IHR reported the reason for why they would potentially get married. Of these 44 participants there were 28 reported counts of love as a reason for potential marriage, 5 counts for religious reasons, 5 counts for 'other', 2 counts for

⁷ The 'other' category was an open-ended option and included participant responses of convenience, accommodation, and parent for child.

pregnancy, and 1 count for financial reasons. As before, please note that unmarried couples could choose more than one reason for why they would potentially get married in the future.

5.2.9 Children

The range for the number of children from the current IHR was 0 to 5. Half the sample had children in other households, specifically 45% of women ($n = 41$) and 55% of men ($n = 51$). However, one should keep in mind that the participants ranged from 19 to 70 years old, so many of their children would have moved out to start their own families. Children from previous relationships living in the current household were mainly those of the woman. Within the total sample there were 21 children who were women's children from previous relationships living in the current households, compared to 3 children who were men's children from previous relationships living in the current households. Three women (4%) were pregnant at the time of the survey.

5.2.10 Relationship Information: Summary and Discussion

The majority of the sample was married and most participants were in longer-term IHR (mean relationship duration of almost 17 years for the total sample). It appears that individuals in this community tended to have few short-term relationships and in most cases had 1 long-term relationship (their current IHR). This trend pertaining to relationships history is further attested to by the finding that two-thirds of the sample had only 1 significant or important IHR during their lifetime. Furthermore, the majority of the sample (81%) had cohabited with only 1 partner during their lifetime (their current IHR) and did not have previous marriages. In comparing rates of marriage versus cohabitation in the present study, the proportion of couples married (rather than cohabiting) was higher than has been reported in previous South African research. For example, according to the South African 2001 Census (Statistics South Africa, 2003), information for Ward 3 (which encompasses the community in the present study) indicated that 2,526 people were married and 1,041 were cohabiting. This is a ratio of 2.4:1. The ratio of marriage to cohabitation in the present study was 3.7:1.

The 2001 Census (cited in Kalule-Sabitt, Palamuleni, Makiwane & Amoateng, 2007) reported the mean age of marriage for 'Coloured' women as 27.0 years and for 'Coloured' men as 28.7 years. The figure for men was almost identical to that found for men in the present study (28.42 years). However, the figure for women was slightly higher than that found for women in the present study (25.84 years). In other words, women in the present sample tended to marry relatively earlier. Higher age at marriage for women is associated with an improvement in women's social standing in society through modernising

forces like education, urbanisation, and employment (Kalule-Sabitt et al., 2007). Thus, women's relatively younger age at marriage in the present sample may be related to their poor social status in society in terms of limited education and employment, and their residence in a semi-rural community. Education plays an especially important role in transforming attitudes towards childbearing and marriage.

In an examination of data on the South African population, Kalule-Sabitt et al. (2007) highlighted low levels of marital dissolution through divorce and/or separation, with only about 2% of men and 3.5% of women reporting themselves as divorced or separated. Furthermore, about 2% of men and 10% of women reported themselves as widowed. In the present sample, only 11 of the 186 participants (5.9%) had previous marriages. However, we do not know whether these marriages ended through divorce or widowhood.

Cultural attitudes about marital status are known to be problematic in the analysis and interpretation of results of marital patterns (Kalule-Sabitt et al., 2007). For example, Udjo (2003) highlights the existence of social stigma attached to divorce. As such, survey-based studies may underestimate the extent to which divorce has occurred as some divorced individuals may report they have never been married in order to increase their marriageability in society (Udjo, 2003). Where divorce is followed by remarriage, individuals might frequently record their relationship status as only 'currently married'.

In the present study, love was the most frequently cited reason for marriage among married couples and the most frequently cited reason for potential marriage in the future among unmarried couples. This finding is in accordance with other South African research. For example, Ramphal (1991) also found love to be the most frequently cited reason for marriage. There appears to be a growing tendency for family relations to be based on the sentiments of love rather than economic or social concerns (Amoateng & Richter, 2007). However, the quantitative nature of the questionnaire used in the present study, did not allow for an understanding of participants' constructions of love. It would be useful for a qualitative study to explore this theme in more depth.

Of particular interest was the finding that children from previous relationships living in the current household were mainly those of the female partner, suggesting that women, more than men, are still primarily responsible for childcare. South African research on low-income farms indicates that responsibility for care is not shared equally between female and male partners, regardless of the female

partner's employment status (e.g., Davies, 1990; Kritzinger & Vorster, 1998). More often than not, dual breadwinning implies dual burden for women. Where women take responsibility for children, men are exempted from doing the work this entails. In the present sample, there were 21 children from women's previous relationships living in the current household compared to 3 children from men's previous relationships living in the current household. The low economic activity of women in the sample is most likely related to their responsibility of care. The onus has "always remained on women to accommodate the desire, demand or necessity to undertake paid work within their caregiver role" (Irving, 2007, p. 175). The transition to parenthood among heterosexual couples typically increases the gender gap in family work; women's primary responsibility for childcare is added to their primary responsibility of housework, often requiring them to reduce their hours of paid work to compensate (Coltrane, 2000). Findings from research on low-income farms in the Western Cape showed that female farm workers' household and childcare responsibilities accommodate the demands of farm work (Kritzinger & Vorster, 1995, cited in Kritzinger & Vorster, 1998). Their housework is completed either before or after they are finished with the day's work, with most of the housework completed after having worked a full day.

5.3 Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Relationship Satisfaction Measures

5.3.1 Reliability of the Relationship Satisfaction Measures

Reliability analyses for the DSS revealed a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .85 for females and .79 for males (overall Cronbach alpha coefficient of .84). Concerning the KMSS, a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .88 for females and .80 for males was found (overall Cronbach alpha coefficient of .87). Due to the large number of items in the IMS (25-item measure), the split-half reliability was calculated. Guttman's split-half reliability for the IMS was found to be .89 for females and .94 for males (overall split-half reliability of .94).

5.3.2 Convergent Validity of the Relationship Satisfaction Measures

The purpose of this analysis was to investigate the convergent validity of the three relationship satisfaction instruments. It was also intended to evaluate the performance of the DSS as an independent measure of relationship satisfaction. Spearman correlations between the measures are displayed in Table 5.5 and are all significant, most of them at the .01 significance level and others at the .05 significance level.

Table 5.5

Correlation Matrix for Relationship Satisfaction Measures

		DSS	IMS	KMSS
Females	DSS	1.00	-0.73**	0.59**
	IMS	-0.73**	1.00	-0.58**
	KMSS	0.59**	-0.58**	1.00
Males	DSS	1.00	-0.55**	0.27*
	IMS	-0.55**	1.00	-0.29*
	KMSS	0.27*	-0.29*	1.00

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Significant correlations were found between the measures, however, in varying degrees and differentially for gender. Significant correlations of -.73 for females and -.55 for males were observed between the DSS and the IMS ($p = .00$). Higher scores on the DSS indicate higher relationship satisfaction, whereas higher scores on the IMS indicate lower relationship satisfaction, hence the negative correlation between the two measures. Significant correlations of .59 for females ($p = .00$) and .27 for males ($p = .01$) were observed between the DSS and the KMSS. Significant correlations of -.58 for females ($p = .00$) and -.29 for males ($p = .01$) were observed between the IMS and the KMSS. Again, higher scores on the KMSS indicate higher relationship satisfaction, whereas higher scores on the IMS indicate lower relationship satisfaction, hence the negative correlation between the two measures.

5.3.3 Relationship Satisfaction Measures: Summary and Discussion

There is strong evidence for the reliability of all three instruments, suggesting that these instruments may be appropriate for contexts other than that of a Western, middle-income, White population, for example, low-income, semi-rural, 'Coloured' participants with limited formal education. Of particular

interest is the Cronbach alpha coefficient of .84 (overall) for the DSS which, although is lower than Spanier's original figure (.94; Spanier, 1976), is still within acceptable range and is similar to other reports of the reliability of the DSS. For example, in a South African study using a convenience sample of undergraduate university students, Pretorius (1997) found the reliability of the DSS to be .85.

Correlations between the DSS and IMS were significant ($p = .00$) and the effect sizes were large ($-.73$ for females and $-.55$ for males), indicating good convergent validity. Although the correlations between the DSS and KMSS in the present study were significant the effect sizes were relatively small ($.59$ for females and $.27$ for males) compared to those usually found internationally, particularly for men. For example, Kurdek (1998) found correlations of $.82$ for husbands and $.84$ for wives between the DSS and the KMSS. Likewise, Hunsley et al. (1995) who, like the present study, used a version of the KMSS applicable to non-married couples, found these correlations to be $.76$ for male partners and $.77$ for female partners. Accordingly, the three-item KMSS would most likely not be recommended as a substitute for the lengthier DSS or the IMS in measuring relationship satisfaction, and its suitability as an abbreviated measure of relationship satisfaction in different South African contexts should be explored in future research.

In general there was a tendency for the size of correlations between the measures to be larger, as well as more significant, for women than for men. Again, further research is necessary to investigate whether this was a chance finding or whether it might be consistent over studies, in addition to what such a finding might mean.

5.4 Relationship Satisfaction

Levels of relationship satisfaction in the sample are reported descriptively and discussed (clinical significance) separately in terms of each relationship satisfaction measure, as well as for men and women. This is followed by the report and discussion of gender differences in the relationship satisfaction of the sample.

5.4.1 Relationship Satisfaction: Means Scores and Clinical Significance

5.4.1.1 DSS

According to the DSS (possible range of 0 to 50), the mean score for women ($n = 93$) was 36.21 ($SD = 8.37$) and the mean score for men ($n = 93$) was 39.39 ($SD = 6.30$). Higher scores indicate higher relationship satisfaction. There is currently no clinical cutoff score for the DSS.

5.4.1.2 IMS

Higher scores on the IMS indicate lower relationship satisfaction (possible range of 0 to 100). The mean score for women ($n = 93$) was 20.05 ($SD = 20.92$) and the mean score for men ($n = 93$) was 12.75 ($SD = 13.45$). Scores below 30 on the IMS indicate satisfaction with the relationship. Thus, *on average*, both men and women were satisfied with their IHR. However, on an individual basis, using the cutoff score of 30, 18 women (19.4%) and 8 men (8.6%) were determined as being clinically dissatisfied with their IHR.

5.4.1.3 KMSS

Like the DSS, the higher the score on the KMSS the higher the relationship satisfaction (possible range of 3 to 21). Women ($n = 93$) were found to score lower with a mean score of 16.87 ($SD = 3.58$), whereas 18.4 ($SD = 1.98$) was the mean score for men ($n = 93$). Using the cutoff score of 17 as determined by Crane et al. (2000), *on average*, both men and women were satisfied with their IHR (the mean score for women was only just below the cutoff score of 17). However, on an individual basis, using the cutoff score of 17, 20 women (21.5%) and 5 men (5.4%) were determined as being clinically dissatisfied with their IHR.

5.4.2 Gender Differences in Relationship Satisfaction

A comparison of relationship satisfaction scores across gender revealed a significant difference, with men ($n = 93$) experiencing significantly higher relationship satisfaction than women ($n = 93$). This finding was consistent for all three instruments used to measure relationship satisfaction (see Table 5.6).

5.4.3 Relationship Satisfaction: Summary and Discussion

Results show that, although both men and women were satisfied (on average) with their IHR, women reported significantly lower relationship satisfaction than men [e.g., $F(1, 92) = 13.08$, $p = .00$ for the DSS]. The ratio of dissatisfied women to dissatisfied men exceeded 2:1 according to the IMS and was 4:1 according to the KMSS. Aggregating estimates of these measures, over 20% of women in the sample were clinically dissatisfied with their IHR compared to 7% of men. Differences in relationship satisfaction have generated interest for psychologists, sociologists, and other family researchers for a number of decades. Results of the present study parallel frequent international findings that women experience less relationship satisfaction than men in their IHR (e.g., Dillaway & Broman, 2001; Mickelson et al., 2006; Williams & Frieze, 2005).

Table 5.6

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance for Gender Differences in Relationship Satisfaction: DSS, IMS, and KMSS

	Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
DSS	Gender	1	468.30	468.30	13.08**	0.000487
	Error	92	3292.90	35.80		
IMS	Gender	1	2476.11	2476.11	10.32*	0.001811
	Error	92	22065.62	239.84		
KMSS	Gender	1	108.41	108.41	15.14**	0.000188
	Error	92	658.59	7.16		

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

According to Shek (1995b), there are two possible (but not mutually exclusive) conceptual explanations for gender differences in marital satisfaction. The first explanation is based on the argument that male and female roles in the marital relationship are different and that the roles of married females are more stressful and disadvantaged but less gratifying than the roles of married males (e.g., Impett & Peplau, 2006). For example, the comparatively disadvantaged female role in the marital relationship can be exemplified in the following predicament: “The housewife’s role is less rewarding than that of a working woman if a married woman stays at home, whereas a married woman who takes up a full-time job will encounter multiple role demands and role conflicts” (Shek, 1995b, p. 700). Given that female roles in the marital relationship are less rewarding and more demanding, married females would derive comparatively less benefits from marriage and they would regard their marriages less positively than would males.

The negative nature of female roles in the marital relationship might further be intensified by the finding that women are more likely to use the marital role to define their identities and are socialised to rely more on marriage as a source of gratification (Cross & Madson, 1997). For example, it may be more likely that women rather than men rely on their marital roles for a sense of personal value and self-worth, as well as accept greater responsibility for dissatisfactions and problems in marriage.

A second explanation for gender differences in marital satisfaction entails the differential expectations of marriage held by men and women (Shek, 1995b). According to this view, women are less satisfied with the marital relationship (or perceive the marital relationship less positively) than men because women tend to hold higher expectations for intimacy and emotional support in the marital relationship which cannot be easily satisfied by men who are not socialised to provide relationships with such qualities (Duncombe & Marsden, 1993), resulting in a 'relational deficit' (Bernard, 1976). The higher expectations of women for intimate interpersonal exchange within IHR may induce a greater sense of deprivation (and consequently dissatisfaction) when not met and a greater sense of satisfaction when fulfilled. Indeed, despite dissatisfaction with gender inequalities in finances and domestic tasks, many women express dissatisfaction primarily with what they perceive as men's incapacity or unwillingness to 'do' the emotional intimacy deemed necessary by women to sustain IHR (Duncombe & Marsden, 1993). Thus, women's lower relationship satisfaction may be the result of a 'gender division of emotion work' (Duncombe & Marsden, 1993), where it is assumed that women will take the responsibility for the management of emotion in IHR.

The implications for women of unfulfilled marital expectations might also be exacerbated by the fact that women often have relationships that are close and intimate (with their female friends for example) and such relationships may be used as the bases on which to evaluate their marriages (Umberson, Chen, House, Hopkins & Slaten, 1996). In contrast, men, whose sole or primary source of emotional support is frequently the partner, may be less affected by the quality of interaction, since they have fewer bases for comparison than do women, who frequently have other close relationships. There is a mounting body of literature suggesting that men and women experience marital satisfaction in different ways. Women are more frequently perceived as being relationship oriented and for taking personal responsibility for the health and maintenance of the marital relationship (Acitelli, 1992; Fincham, Beach, Harold & Osborne, 1997; Gottman, 1994).

5.5 Demographic Variables and Relationship Satisfaction

5.5.1 Educational Attainment

There was a significant negative correlation between men's educational attainment and their female partners' relationship satisfaction (Spearman $r = -.36$, $p = .00$). In other words, the higher the male partner's educational attainment the lower the female partner's relationship satisfaction. This is in contrast to mainstream findings that educational attainment is positively associated with relationship satisfaction, in other words, the higher the educational attainment, the higher the relationship

satisfaction (e.g., Lev-Wiesel & Al-Krenawi, 1999). However, recent research, involving Anglo- and African-American married and long-term cohabiting couples, found that as the educational attainment of the couple increases, relationship satisfaction decreases (Willettts, 2006). Furthermore, in other research educational attainment has not been found to be significantly related to relationship satisfaction. For example, a study in a developing country (Chile) found no statistical association between marital satisfaction and economic or educational level (Roizblatt et al., 1999).

Willettts (2006) does not offer any explanation for the negative relationship between relationship satisfaction and educational attainment found in her study. However, other significant findings in Willettts' study might shed light on this unexpected finding. For instance, Willettts found that as the educational attainment of the couple increases, perceptions of equity decrease. Previous research has established that perceptions of equity influence relationship satisfaction (e.g., see Saginak & Saginak, 2005, for a review on equity, gender, and marital satisfaction).

5.5.2 Perception of Religious Status

Participants were asked to report both their own and their partners' religious status (i.e., yes or no as to whether they belonged to a religion). Therefore, for each participant their own report of religious status as well as their partner's perception of their religious status was obtained. Whereas the female partner's relationship satisfaction was not significantly related to her male partner's report of religious status, it was found to be significantly related to *her perception* of her male partner's religious status [$F(1, 91) = 5.94, p = .02$]. However, this significant difference was not supported by a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U -test, and because some deviations from the ANOVA assumptions were suspected, a further non-parametric bootstrap technique was used. Results of the bootstrap technique also indicated a significant difference. Thus, there was some evidence that women who perceived their male partner as belonging to a religion (Christianity in all cases; $n = 85$) experienced higher relationship satisfaction than women who perceived their male partner as not belonging to a religion ($n = 8$).

Interestingly, the female partner's perception of her male partner's religious status was also significantly related to the male partner's relationship satisfaction [$F(1, 91) = 6.14, p = .02$]. Again, a large difference in p values ($p = .02$ and Mann-Whitney $U p = .18$) necessitated the bootstrap analysis which confirmed a significant result at the .05 significance level. Thus, the male partners of women who perceive them as belonging to a religion (Christianity) experienced higher relationship satisfaction than the male partners of women who perceived them as not belonging to a religion.

In sum, in couples where the female partner perceived the male partner as belonging to a religion (Christianity), both the female and the male partner experienced significantly higher relationship satisfaction, compared to couples in which the female partner perceived the male partner as not belonging to a religion. These significant effects were detected despite the small size of the non-religious group ($n = 8$ compared to the religious group of $n = 85$). Hatch, James and Schumm (1986) provide some evidence that religiosity as a perception, may have some positive effect on relationship satisfaction, even if one's spouse is not religious. The opposite might also be true, for example (Hatch et al., 1986):

A husband might profess to have become more religious; but if he continues to give priority to work over family and spends little time with his family, the effect of his religious experience may be minimal at best, if not adverse (if seen as hypocritical by other family members) (p. 544).

Such findings may help to explain why, in the present study, the relationship satisfaction of the female partner was not significantly related to her male partner's report of his religious status, but rather to her *perception* of her male partner's religious status. It is likely that the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction is affected by intervening variables. In the above-mentioned study by Hatch et al. (1986), increasing degrees of perceived spiritual intimacy were positively associated with emotional intimacy. Results indicated that emotional intimacy operated as an intervening variable between spiritual intimacy and marital satisfaction. Similarly, other specific intervening variables such as commitment, appreciation, communication effectiveness, and time spent together, have been shown to influence the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction (e.g., Wolfinger & Wilcox, 2008).

How people understand religious practices and institutions and the extent to which they engage the relevant institutions is at least as important to mere exposure to these factors, for example, spiritual activity versus religious identity (Bradbury et al., 2000). Consequently, there are most likely noteworthy differences in how partners within a couple respond to otherwise identical aspects of religiosity.

5.5.3 Church Attendance

For both men and women, frequency of their own church attendance was significantly related to their own relationship satisfaction (Spearman $r = .24$, $p = .02$ for women, and Spearman $r = 0.23$, $p = .02$ for

men). There were small to medium positive correlations between the variables, in other words, the more frequently participants attend church, the higher their own relationship satisfaction. Religious attendance can contribute to the person adopting a more favourable view of his or her relationship (Wolfinger & Wilcox, 2008). Churchgoing persons may have more realistic expectations of their partners, feel more secure in their relationships, or view their relationships in a spiritual light that makes them look more favourably on their partners, all contributing to relationship satisfaction (Wolfinger & Wilcox, 2008).

With regards to partner's frequency of church attendance and relationship satisfaction, the frequency of the female partner's church attendance was significantly related to her male partner's relationship satisfaction (Spearman $r = .25$, $p = .02$). Interestingly, the opposite was not found; the frequency of the male partner's church attendance was not significantly related to his female partner's relationship satisfaction (Spearman $r = .02$, $p = .82$). The more frequently the female partner attended church the higher the male partner's relationship satisfaction, whereas the frequency of the male partner's church attendance was not correlated with the female partner's relationship satisfaction. These findings are contrary to recent research by Wolfinger and Wilcox (2008) who found that the male partner's regular religious attendance, but not the female partner's religious attendance, was related to both the male and female partner's relationship satisfaction. In other words it found men's religious participation to be more influential in relationship satisfaction than women's religious participation. In the present sample the female partner's church attendance may be positively associated with her male partner's relationship satisfaction for the following reasons: First, religious institutions are successful at fostering stronger investments in relationships, perhaps by highlighting the needs and concerns of family. Secondly, the male partner may look more favourably on his female partner (above and beyond her actual behaviour) who attends church, viewing such attendance as a mark of responsibility, maturity, or trustworthiness.

The frequency of joint church attendance was significantly related to both women's (Spearman $r = .46$, $p = .00$) and men's (Spearman $r = .33$, $p = .00$) relationship satisfaction. Hünler and Gençöz (2005) purport that religiosity, but in particular shared religious beliefs and activities (e.g., joint church attendance), intensify marital satisfaction. In Christian worship, some practices such as going to church together or praying together, could be important factors that make couples closer to each other (Hünler & Gençöz, 2005). Similarly, Mahoney et al. (1999) found that proximal religious variables, such as joint religious activities, were associated with higher marital satisfaction. The construct of joint

religious activities provides a more in-depth look at the extent to which partners share religious or spiritual experiences and practices (Mahoney et al., 1999). Joint religious activities may enhance relationship satisfaction in several ways. For instance, they entail opportunities for partners to participate in enjoyable or meaningful rituals together, discuss and develop a set of shared values, and provide each other with support, particularly about spiritual, religious, and moral issues.

Thus, there appeared to be a strong positive relationship between church attendance and relationship satisfaction in the present sample, a relationship that has been well-established in previous research (e.g., DeGenova, 2008; Dudley & Kosinski, 1990; Wolfinger & Wilcox, 2008).

5.5.4 Sharing of Bedroom and Bed at Night

Sharing of bedroom at night

Those couples who shared their bedroom with one or more children at night ($n = 27$) experienced significantly lower relationship satisfaction than couples who did not share their bedroom with one or more children at night [$n = 66$; $F(1, 91) = 5.64, p = .02$]. Furthermore, the data suggested that this may have been especially so for the male partner's relationship satisfaction. Although the gender interaction effect within this finding was non-significant [$F(1, 91) = 1.53, p = .22$], there was a very slight trend (see Figure 5.3). In other words, the relationship satisfaction of both men and women was lower if the couple shared their bedroom with one or more children at night, but men's relationship satisfaction appeared to be slightly more affected.

There were too little data available to compare whether couples in which partners shared a bedroom at night were significantly different in terms of their relationship satisfaction compared to couples in which partners did not share a bedroom at night.

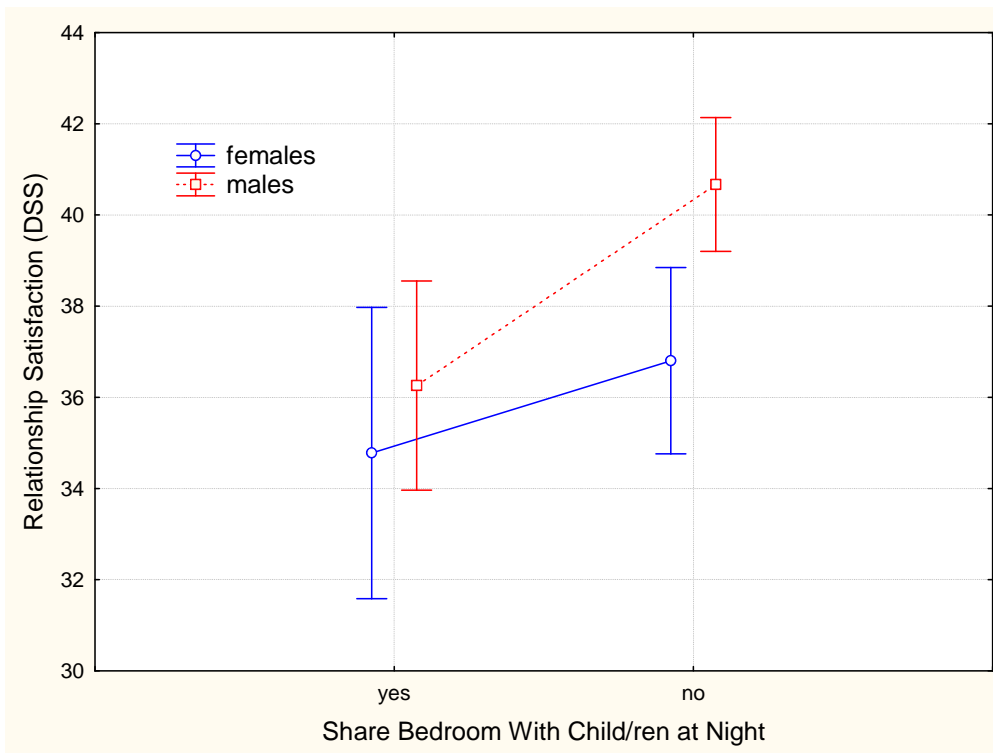


Figure 5.3. Repeated measures analysis of variance for couples sharing room with one or more children at night and relationship satisfaction: Gender interaction effect.

Sharing of bed at night

Sharing a bed with one's partner at night was the best indicator of relationship satisfaction in the present study [$F(1, 91) = 10.94, p = .00$]. Those participants who did not share a bed with their partner at night ($n = 7$) experienced significantly lower relationship satisfaction than participants who did share a bed with their partner at night ($n = 86$). This result was highly significant despite the small group of couples in which partners did not share a bed at night ($n = 7$). There was no significant gender difference within this finding [i.e., no gender interaction effect: $F(1, 91) = 0.41, p = .52$]. Thus, the relationship satisfaction of women was just as affected as the relationship satisfaction of men by the sharing or non-sharing of one's bed with his or her partner at night. This is in contrast to the aforementioned slight trend in the data (although not significant) that perhaps men's relationship satisfaction was more affected than women's relationship satisfaction by the presence of one or more children in the bedroom at night (although women's relationship satisfaction was still significantly affected).

Relationship satisfaction was also significantly related to sharing one's bed with one or more children at night [$F(1, 91) = 9.3, p = .00$]. Those couples who shared their bed with one or more children at night ($n = 14$) experienced significantly lower relationship satisfaction than those couples who did not share their bed with one or more children at night ($n = 79$). Again, this result was highly significant despite the small group of couples who shared their bed with one or more children at night ($n = 14$).

Those couples in which partners did not share a bed at night were the group with the lowest relationship satisfaction in the present sample. Partners not sharing a bed may be indicative of relationship dissatisfaction. In other words, because they are dissatisfied with their IHR, they do not share a bed. However, the community of study is one of many low-income, semi-rural Western Cape communities that have limited access to basic resources such as adequate housing (e.g., Davies, 1990; Statistics South Africa, 2003). Accordingly, absence of adequate housing may contribute to relationship dissatisfaction by acting as a barrier to partners sharing a room and/or bed at night. In sum, partners not sharing a bed and/or room at night could be an indication of relationship dissatisfaction or, alternatively, it may contribute to relationship dissatisfaction. There has been little research in this area and, while this may not be a viable direction for research in Western countries that generally have access to basic housing, it might be an avenue of research worth pursuing in the South African context, where communities do not always enjoy access to such resources.

Findings for the relationship between relationship satisfaction and bed/room sharing at night might also point to the sexual satisfaction component of relationship satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction has been found to play an important role in relationship satisfaction and to be one of the best indicators of relationship satisfaction (e.g., Guo & Huang, 2005; Litzinger & Gordon, 2005; Young, Denny, Luquis & Young, 2000). Continued sexual activity and sexual interest have been found to be important in maintaining a high quality marriage (e.g., Ade-Ridder, 1990). Sexual activity and sexual interest might very well be compromised by the presence of children in the bedroom and/or bed at night. Also situations where partners do not share a bed at night might indicate little sexual activity and/or sexual interest. This is likely a two-way relationship; researchers have demonstrated that satisfaction with sexual aspects of the relationship plays a significant role in overall relationship satisfaction, and conversely, have demonstrated that among factors most highly related to sexual satisfaction, relationship satisfaction is among the most important contributors (e.g., Young, Denny, Luquis & Young, 1998; Young et al., 2000).

5.5.5 Age

Analyses were conducted in three ways. Firstly, relationship satisfaction of the participant was linked to his or her own age. This relationship was found to be non-significant for both women (Spearman $r = .08$, $p = .45$) and men (Spearman $r = .01$, $p = .89$).

Second of all, relationship satisfaction of the participant was linked to his or her partner's age. The age of the female partner was not significantly related to the male partner's relationship satisfaction (Spearman $r = .07$, $p = .51$). However, although not significant, there was a slight positive trend between the age of the male partner and the female partner's relationship satisfaction (Spearman $r = .15$, $p = .15$). An outlier within this data slightly affected the correlation (Pearson's correlation would have been significant if this outlier was omitted from the analyses). So although the relationship between age of the male partner and the female partner's relationship satisfaction was not significant, it could be seen as a possible trend suggesting that the older the male partner, the higher the relationship satisfaction of the female partner tends to be.

Thirdly, relationship satisfaction was linked to the average age difference between partners. Both the absolute age difference (i.e., the age difference in years not taking into account the direction of this age difference, whether the female or male partner was older or younger) and the directional age difference (i.e., taking into account the direction of this age difference, whether the female or male partner was older or younger; the average age difference was a negative value in cases where the female partner was older than the male partner) were analysed. None of these results were significant. For the absolute age difference Spearman $r = .00$, $p = .98$ for women, and Spearman $r = .08$, $p = .47$ for men. For directional age difference Spearman $r = .03$, $p = .81$ for women, and Spearman $r = .08$, $p = .46$ for men.

5.5.6 Religious Status

Whether women reported belonging to a religion (in all cases Christianity) or not was not significantly related to their own [$F(1, 91) = 0.59$, $p = .44$] or to their male partner's [$F(1, 91) = 1.69$, $p = .20$] relationship satisfaction. Likewise, men's religious status was not linked to their own [$F(1, 91) = 0.07$, $p = .80$] or to their female partner's [$F(1, 91) = 0.40$, $p = .53$] relationship satisfaction. However, there was little power to detect significance because of the small sizes of the non-religious groups ($n = 6$ compared to the religious group of $n = 87$, and $n = 10$ compared to the religious group of $n = 83$, for women and men respectively).

Analyses were also conducted in order to investigate whether the relationship satisfaction of couples varied according to whether partners in a couple were heterogeneous⁸ ($n = 16$) or homogeneous⁹ ($n = 77$) in terms of religious status. No significant difference was found in the relationship satisfaction between the two groups [$F(1, 91) = 0.28, p = .60$]. The gender interaction effect was also non-significant [$F(1, 91) = 0.64, p = .42$]. In other words, the difference in relationship satisfaction between the two groups was found to be non-significant for both male and female partners.

5.5.7 Church Affiliation

Results show a non-significant relationship between church affiliation and relationship satisfaction: $F(3, 49) = 1.78, p = .16$ for women, and $F(4, 46) = 1.14, p = .35$ for men. In other words, the relationship satisfaction of participants did not differ according to the church affiliations of Old Apostolic, Methodist, Pentecostal, or Dutch Reformed (as well as Fellowship of Christians for men).

Because of the large number of different church affiliations, the sample was divided into many small groups, which could possibly hide existing differences in relationship satisfaction. For this reason, church affiliations were assimilated into broader categories, as described earlier in this chapter (section 5.1.5). Two main categories were used, namely Mainline Churches and Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches. Despite the broader categorisation of church affiliations, there was no significant difference in the relationship satisfaction of couples who belonged to Mainline Churches and those who belonged to Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches: The relationship satisfaction of couples in which female partners belonged to Mainline Churches was not significantly different from the relationship satisfaction of couples in which female partners belonged to Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches [$F(1, 74) = 1.95, p = .17$]. Also, the gender interaction effect was non-significant [$F(1, 74) = 1.28, p = .26$]. The relationship satisfaction of couples in which male partners belonged to Mainline Churches was not significantly different from the relationship satisfaction of couples in which male partners belonged to Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches [$F(1, 74) = 0.21, p = .65$]. Although, the gender interaction effect was non-significant [$F(1, 74) = 2.83, p = .10$], there does seem to be a very slight trend (see Figure 5.4): Whereas the female partner tended to experience higher relationship satisfaction in cases where her male partner belonged to Mainline churches (rather than Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches), male

⁸ In 10 of the couples the female partner belonged to a religion but the male partner did not. In six couples the female partner did not belong to a religion but her male partner did (Christianity in all cases).

⁹ There were no couples in which neither partner was religious. Thus, this group contained couples in which both partners belonged to a religion (Christianity in all cases).

partners who belonged to Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches (rather than Mainline Churches) tended to experience slightly higher relationship satisfaction.

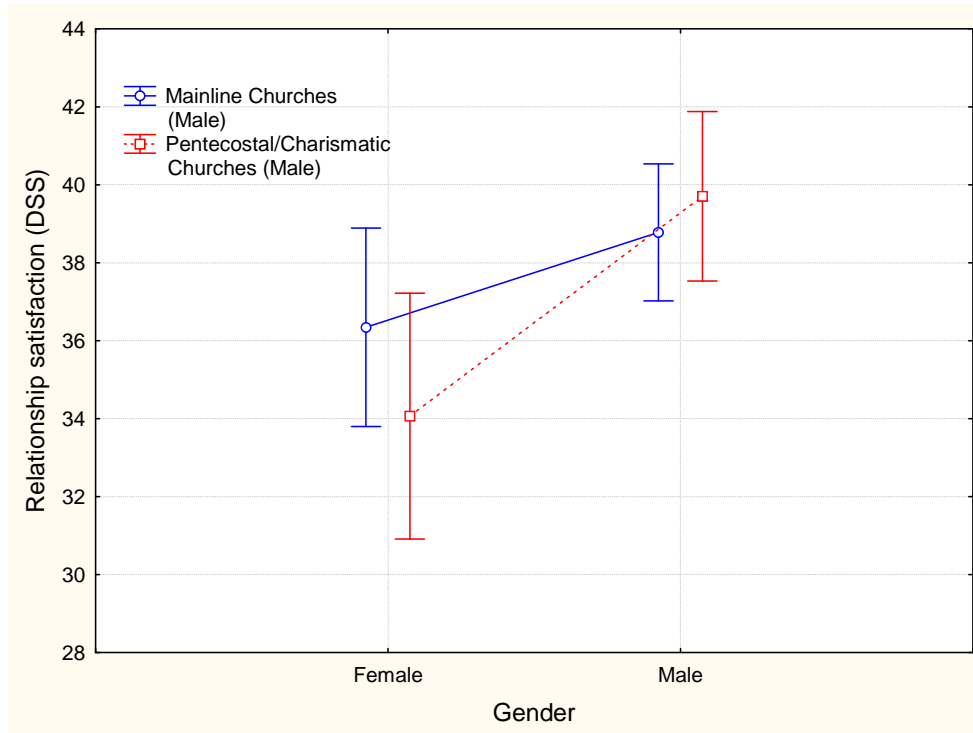


Figure 5.4. Repeated measures analysis of variance for relationship satisfaction and male partners' church affiliation: Gender interaction effect.

Analyses were also conducted in order to investigate whether the relationship satisfaction of couples varied according to whether partners in a couple were homogeneous ($n = 61$) or heterogeneous ($n = 8$) in terms of church affiliation (using the broader categories of Mainline Churches and Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches). The relationship satisfaction of couples was found not to vary significantly according to homogeneity or heterogeneity of church affiliation [$F(1, 67) = 0.05, p = .82$] and the gender interaction effect for these data was also non-significant [$F(1, 67) = 0.05, p = .83$].

5.5.8 Employment

Analyses generally indicated that employment was not linked with relationship satisfaction. The only pattern that tended towards significance (positive trend) was the relationship between men's employment and their own relationship satisfaction. Initially this relationship was found to be non-significant but the large difference in p values warranted further investigation [$F(1, 91) = 2.32, p = .13$ and Mann-Whitney $U p = .06$]. The bootstrap technique was conducted and this showed a significant

result at the .05 significance level. However, the pattern between men's employment and relationship satisfaction should be interpreted as a strong trend ($p = .13$) and not as a significant result. Thus, although not significant, men who were employed tended to experience higher relationship satisfaction.

In contrast, men's employment was not significantly related to their female partners' relationship satisfaction [$F(1, 91) = 0.1, p = .76$]. Similarly, women's employment was not significantly related to their own [$F(1, 91) = 0.13, p = .72$] or their male partners' [$F(1, 91) = 0.76, p = .38$] relationship satisfaction.

Additional analyses were conducted in order to further investigate the interaction of partner's un/employment in their relationship satisfaction. Couples were divided into four groups:

- a. both partners were employed ($n = 47$);
- b. male partner only was employed ($n = 31$);
- c. female partner only was employed ($n = 8$);
- d. both partners were unemployed ($n = 7$).

Although differences between groups in terms of relationship satisfaction were found to be non-significant [$F(3, 89) = 0.53, p = .66$], when broken down along gender, there was a trend for male partners in couples where both partners were unemployed to experience less relationship satisfaction (see Figure 5.5). However, this gender interaction effect was not significant and should be viewed as a trend only [$F(3, 89) = 1.83, p = .15$].

Analyses also investigated the link between relationship satisfaction and the nature of employment. As discussed previously in the Demographic Information section (specifically section 5.1.3), there were some participants currently *employed* that classified as seasonal workers (there were months in the year when they do not work) and there were some participants currently *unemployed* that classified as seasonal workers (there were months in the year when they do work). Although not significant [$F(2, 88) = 1.93, p = .15$], there was a pattern for men who were either employed throughout the year ($n = 75$) or were seasonal workers ($n = 7$) to experience higher relationship satisfaction than men who are unemployed throughout the year ($n = 9$; see Figure 5.6). This trend parallels other patterns described pertaining to men's employment and higher relationship satisfaction.

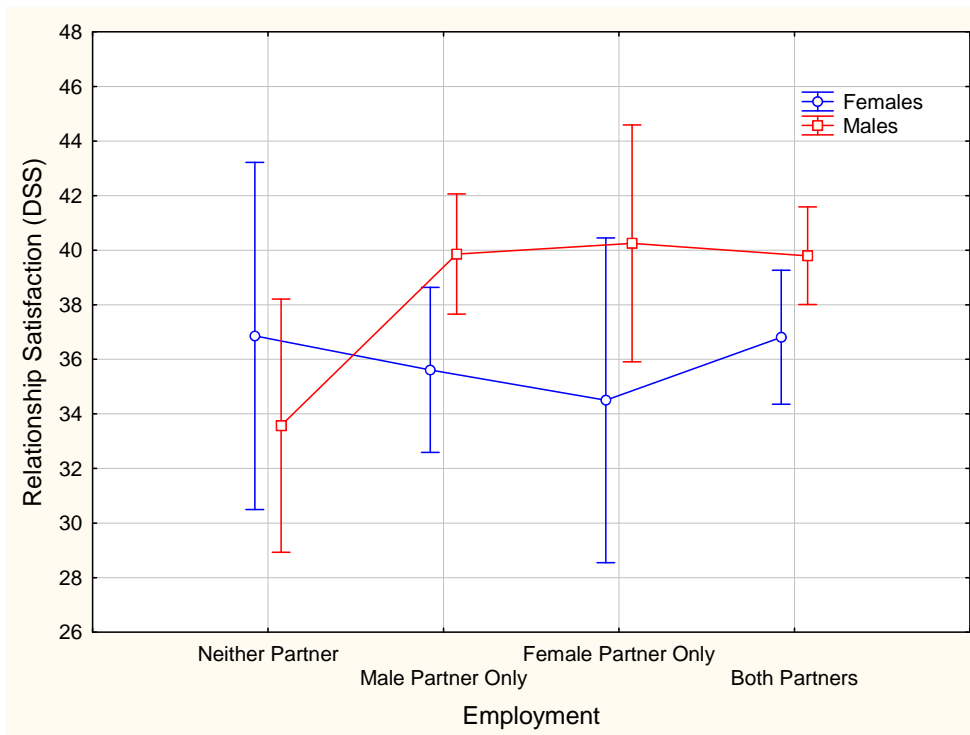


Figure 5.5. Repeated measures analysis of variance for interaction of partners' un/employment and relationship satisfaction: Gender interaction effect.

In contrast, whether men were employed throughout the year, seasonal workers, or unemployed throughout the year was not significantly related to their female partner's relationship satisfaction [$F(2, 88) = 0.38, p = .68$]. Similarly, whether women were employed throughout the year ($n = 41$), seasonal workers ($n = 17$), or unemployed throughout the year ($n = 34$) was not significantly related to either their own [$F(2, 89) = 0.60, p = .55$] or their male partners' [$F(2, 89) = 1.19, p = .31$] relationship satisfaction.



Figure 5.6. Repeated measures analysis of variance for nature of employment and relationship satisfaction: Men.

5.5.9 Couple Monthly Income

Couple monthly income, rather than *household* monthly income, was used for these analyses. The reason for is based on the finding that households may comprise of up to 13 people. Thus, household income for larger households could potentially skew the results in that, although there is a higher income for the household, the couple in question may receive little of this income themselves. Couple monthly income was calculated by summing each partner's reports of their own individual income. This figure only includes money earned through employment and not other forms of income like government grants. Couple monthly income was not significantly related to either women's (Spearman $r = -.07$, $p = .51$) or men's (Spearman $r = -.08$, $p = .47$) relationship satisfaction.

5.5.10 Demographic Variables and Relationship Satisfaction: Summary

Significant results pertaining to demographic variables and relationship satisfaction included:

- negative relationship between the male partner's educational attainment and his female partner's relationship satisfaction;

- in couples where the female partner perceived the male partner as belonging to a religion (Christianity in all cases), both the female and male partner experienced significantly higher relationship satisfaction, compared to couples in which the female partner perceived the male partner as not belonging to a religion;
- positive relationship between participant's own church attendance and his or her own relationship satisfaction, positive relationship between the female partner's church attendance and her male partner's relationship satisfaction, and positive relationship between joint church attendance and both female and male partner's relationship satisfaction; and
- couples who shared their *bedroom* with one or more *children* at night experienced significantly lower relationship satisfaction than those couples who did not, couples who shared their *bed* with one or more *children* at night experienced significantly lower relationship satisfaction than those couples who did not, and couples in which *partners* did not share a *bed* at night experienced significantly lower relationship satisfaction than those couples in which partners did.

Demographic variables found to have a *non-significant* relationship with relationship satisfaction included:

- age;
- church affiliation;
- employment; and
- couple monthly income.

5.6 Relationship Variables and Relationship Satisfaction

5.6.1. Previous Marriages

Couples in which either partner had previous marriages ($n = 9$) and couples in which neither partner had previous marriages ($n = 84$) were compared in terms of their relationship satisfaction. A significant difference in the relationship satisfaction between the groups was found [$F(1, 91) = 4.17, p = .04$] and was consistent for both men and women [gender interaction effect were non-significant: $F(1, 91) = 0.00, p = .95$]. Both partners in couples in which one or both partners had previous marriages experienced significantly higher relationship satisfaction in their current IHR than partners in couples in which neither partner had previous marriages.

Typically, researchers find few differences in the marital satisfaction of couples in first marriages and those in remarriages (e.g., Coleman & Ganong, 1990; Kitson & Holmes, 1992). However, there are exceptions. For example, consistent with the findings of the present study, Buunk and Mutsaers (1999) found that the current marriage was perceived as more satisfying than the former marriage. They attributed this finding to perceptions of equity and how such perceptions influence marital satisfaction. Specifically, they found that marital satisfaction in both the previous and current marriage was higher the more equitable the relationship was and the more advantaged one felt. In general, respondents in the study perceived much more inequity in the previous than in the current marriage, with this being especially true for women. Men, on average, felt deprived in their previous marriage and over benefited in their current marriage, whereas women in their current marriage were close to perceiving equity. By gender, women's marital satisfaction in the current marriage was more strongly associated with the degree of equity while men's marital satisfaction was more strongly associated with the degree of feeling advantaged.

5.6.2 Age at Commencement of Current Relationship Status

Age at cohabitation

The female partner's age at cohabitation was significantly related to her male partner's relationship satisfaction (Spearman $r = .49$, $p = .04$). Thus, the older the female partner was at the commencement of cohabitation, the higher the male partner's current relationship satisfaction. Although no other relationships between age at cohabitation and relationship satisfaction were found to be significant, slight trends emerged in the data. For instance, although the relationship between the female partner's age at cohabitation and her own relationship satisfaction was non-significant (Spearman $r = .27$, $p = .27$), the correlation was of a medium size (.27). Similarly, the male partner's age at cohabitation was not significantly related to either his own (Spearman $r = .36$, $p = .14$) or his female partner's (Spearman $r = .33$, $p = .18$) relationship satisfaction. However, both correlations were of a medium size (.36 and .33, respectively). It is possible that the small sample size of cohabiting couples (only 19 couples of the total 93 in the sample were cohabiting couples, approximately 20%), afforded little statistical power to detect significance within these data. Such results suggest a slight general trend indicating that both men and women experienced greater current relationship satisfaction the older they were and the older their partners were at the time they began cohabiting.

There has been little research on the link between age at cohabitation and the relationship satisfaction of cohabiting couples. As such, previous research regarding the relationship between age at marriage

and marital satisfaction are compared to the findings of the present study. Cohabitation as an alternative form of marriage is supported by research showing that persons cohabit at nearly the same age as earlier generations married (Bumpass, Sweet & Cherlin, 1991). In the present study the mean cohabitation duration of cohabiting couples was 13.56 years ($SD = 8.84$). In other words, these couples have cohabited for over 13 years (on average) without being married, suggesting support for cohabitation as an alternative form of marriage. Generally, there has been little research on age at marriage and marital satisfaction – the majority of research on age at marriage is conducted in relation to marital stability. One of the few studies conducted found a non-significant relationship between age at marriage and marital satisfaction (see Bahr, Chappell & Leigh, 1983). However, age at marriage may be important for marital satisfaction for a number of reasons (Heaton, 1991): For instance, age at marriage reflects experience prior to marriage, influences the extent of life course experience after marriage, and influences the age at which other marital events will take place. In other words, younger age at marriage may limit maturity and experience prior to marriage, increase the number of potentially disruptive life course changes that will take place within marriage, and signifies a younger age of experiencing marital transitions.

Age at marriage

In contrast to some of the findings for cohabiting couples, age at marriage for married couples did not appear to influence relationship satisfaction. The female partner's age at marriage was not significantly related to either her own (Spearman $r = .11$, $p = .34$) or her male partner's (Spearman $r = .07$, $p = .56$) relationship satisfaction. Likewise, men's age at marriage was not significantly related to either his own (Spearman $r = -.04$, $p = .75$) or his female partner's (Spearman $r = .08$, $p = .50$) relationship satisfaction.

5.6.3 Relationship Status

Three different types of relationships were found in the community of study: marriage, cohabitation (cohabiting but not married), and committed IHR (unmarried and not cohabiting, but in a committed IHR). However, there were too little data available for couples in committed IHR ($n = 3$) to compare them to the other relationship types in terms of relationship satisfaction. Differences in the relationship satisfaction of married couples ($n = 71$) and cohabiting couples ($n = 19$) were found to be non-significant [$F(1, 88) = 0.00$, $p = .96$].

5.6.4 Relationship Duration

The initial analysis for relationship duration used data from the total sample and measured relationship duration as the duration of the couple's current relationship status. In other words, for married couples relationship duration was equal to the duration of their marriage (does not include dating or cohabitation prior to marriage), for cohabiting couples relationship duration was equal to the duration of their cohabitation (does not include dating prior to cohabitation), and finally for couples in committed IHR relationship duration was equal to the duration of their IHR. Results indicated a non-significant correlation between relationship duration of the couple's current relationship status for both female partner's (Spearman $r = -.03$, $p = .79$) and male partner's (Spearman $r = -.15$, $p = .15$) relationship satisfaction. However, if one looks more closely at the results it becomes apparent that this non-significant result may be less applicable for men. There might be a slight negative trend in the data, in other words, the longer the duration of the IHR the lower the relationship satisfaction of the male partner. This potential trend was investigated further by conducting separate follow-up analyses for married couples and for cohabiting couples. As previously mentioned, there were too little data for couples in committed IHR.

It was investigated as to whether cohabiting couples who had cohabited for longer, experienced different levels of relationship satisfaction to cohabiting couples who had cohabited for shorter periods of time. This relationship was found to be non-significant for both men (Spearman $r = -.02$, $p = .94$) and women (Spearman $r = -.05$, $p = .84$). Whether duration of marriage was significantly related to the marital satisfaction of married couples was also examined. Duration of marriage was not significantly related to either men's (Spearman $r = -.21$, $p = .07$) or women's (Spearman $r = -.06$, $p = .59$) relationship satisfaction. However, this was less applicable for men and, although not significant, there was a definite trend in the data towards a negative relationship between marriage duration and relationship satisfaction for men. The size of the correlation was small to medium ($-.21$) and it did tend towards significance ($p = .07$). In other words, the longer the marriage, the lower the relationship satisfaction experienced by the male partner tends to be. The slight negative trend found in the total sample between relationship duration and relationship satisfaction can be elucidated by the findings for married couples. It appears that relationship duration is more influential for the relationship satisfaction of married men than for married women or cohabiting men and women.

5.6.5 Reason for Marriage or for Marriage in the Future

Assessing the relationship between relationship satisfaction and reason for marriage or for marriage in the future required a large number of analyses to be conducted, and hence, except for trends in these data, statistics for non-significant results are not reported.

Married couples: Reason/s for marriage

There were only enough data available to compare love, pregnancy, and religious reasons, and not financial or “other” reasons. This in itself tells us that it happens only rarely that people marry for financial reasons. This is also generally true for pregnancy and religious reasons, with love being the most commonly cited reason for marriage, as reported previously in the Relationship Information section (section 5.2.8). Overall, the relationship satisfaction of men and women was not found to vary significantly according to the cited reason for marriage.

There were only two slight trends within this data: Men whose female partners cited love as a reason for their marriage ($n = 54$) tended to experience lower relationship satisfaction than men whose female partners did not cite love as a reason for their marriage [$n = 17$; $F(1, 69) = 2.71, p = .10$]. Women who cited pregnancy as a reason for their marriage ($n = 14$) tended to experience lower relationship satisfaction than women who did not cite pregnancy as a reason for their marriage [$n = 57$; $F(1, 69) = 2.44, p = .12$].

Unmarried couples: Reason/s for marriage in the future

For cohabiting couples and couples in committed IHR there were only enough data to link relationship satisfaction with men’s and women’s reports of love and with men’s reports of religious reasons as a reason for marriage in the future. None of these relationships were found to be significant. However, it is important to keep in mind the small sample sizes used in these analyses, and consequently, the little power to detect significance (e.g., 4 men cited religious reasons and 15 did not; 13 women cited love and 6 did not; and 12 men cited love and 7 did not). There was generally less data available for unmarried couples, as married couples made up approximately three-quarters of the sample.

5.6.6 Number of Significant Relationships

Results indicated a non-significant relationship between number of significant relationships (with partners) in one’s lifetime and current relationship satisfaction. The number of significant relationships of the male partner was not significantly related to either his own (Spearman $r = -.05, p = .63$) or his

female partner's (Spearman $r = -.06$, $p = .60$) current relationship satisfaction. Similarly, the number of significant relationships of the female partner was not significantly related to either her own (Spearman $r = .19$, $p = .07$) or her male partner's (Spearman $r = .08$, $p = .46$) current relationship satisfaction.

However, the size of the correlation between the number of significant relationships of women and their own relationship satisfaction was small to medium (.19) and did tend towards significance ($p = .07$). This suggests a potential positive trend between the number of significant relationships of women and their own relationship satisfaction. In other words, the higher the number of significant relationships the female partner had with partners in her lifetime, the higher her relationship satisfaction with the current relationship. This finding might be related to the significant finding between relationship satisfaction and previous marriages in the present study, discussed at the beginning of this section (section 5.6.1): Partners in couples in which one or both partners had previous marriages experienced higher current relationship satisfaction than partners in couples in which neither partner had previous marriages. A previous marriage may well indicate a previous significant relationship.

5.6.7 Children

Total number of children in the household

As previously mentioned, the household was most commonly comprised of the couple and their children. Although not significant, there was a negative trend for men: The higher the number of children in the household, the lower their relationship satisfaction (Spearman $r = -.19$, $p = .07$). This is indicated by the small to medium size of the correlation (-.19) and by the p value which did tend towards significance ($p = .07$). No significant relationship was found between women's relationship satisfaction and the total number of children in the household (Spearman $r = .05$, $p = .64$).

Children from previous relationships living in the current household

Couples who had one or more children from previous relationships living in the current household ($n = 46$) were not significantly different in terms of their relationship satisfaction to couples who did not [$n = 47$; $F(1, 91) = 0.49$, $p = .48$]. However, this finding may be less applicable for men, for whom a trend was seen [the gender interaction effect tended towards significance: $F(1, 91) = 2.46$, $p = .12$] suggesting that men's relationship satisfaction may be lower in couples where there are one or more children from previous relationships living in the current household (see Figure 5.7).

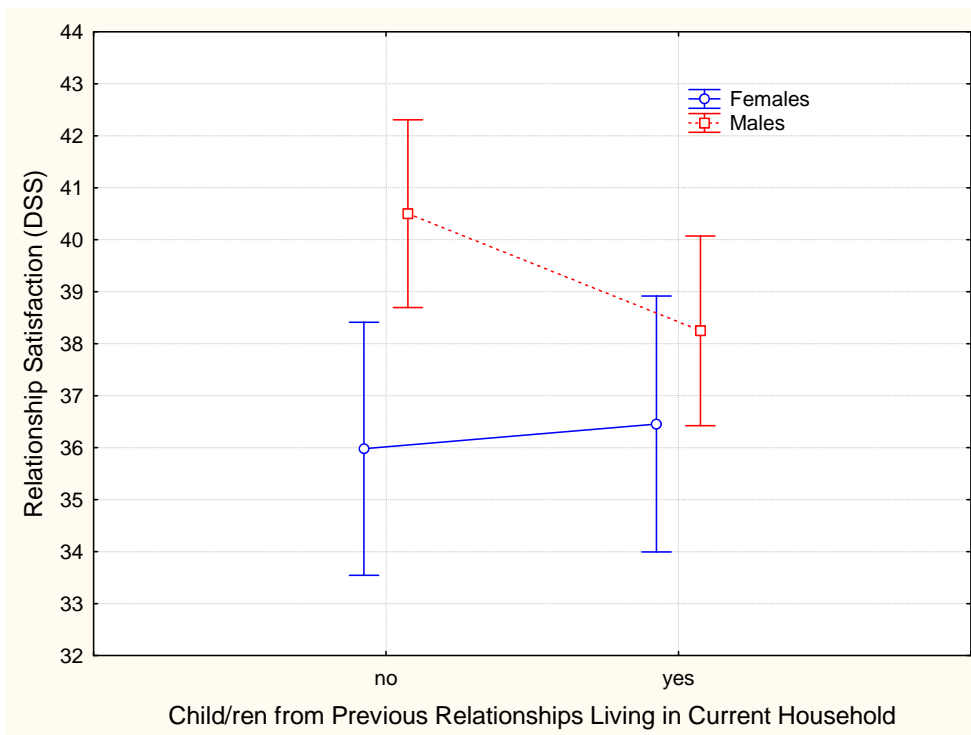


Figure 5.7. Repeated measures analysis of variance for couples with one or more children from previous relationships not/living in the current household and relationship satisfaction: Gender interaction effect.

Parallels between different analyses are evident. Men's relationship satisfaction tends to be lower as the number of children in the household increases. This may be linked to the present study's finding that children from previous relationships living in the current household are most often the women's children. In the Relationship Information section on children (section 5.2.9) we saw that within the total sample there were 21 children who were women's children from previous relationships living in the current households, compared to 3 children who were men's children from previous relationships living in the current households. A possible explanation is, thus, provided for why men and not women appear to be more influenced by the number of children in the household and by children from previous relationships. Parallels such as these strengthen the general trend regarding men's relationship satisfaction and children.

Age of children living in the current household

No significant relationship was found between the median age of children living in the current household and either men's (Spearman $r = .15$, $p = .19$) or women's (Spearman $r = .05$, $p = .67$) relationship satisfaction. Follow-up analyses included linking men and women's relationship

satisfaction with the age of the youngest and eldest child living in the current household. The age of the youngest child was not significantly related to either men's (Spearman $r = .12$, $p = .31$) or women's (Spearman $r = -.08$, $p = .49$) relationship satisfaction. Likewise the age of the eldest child was not significantly related to either men's (Spearman $r = .00$, $p = 1.00$) or women's (Spearman $r = .09$, $p = .42$) relationship satisfaction. In sum, the age of children in the household does not appear to influence relationship satisfaction.

Pregnancy

There were not enough data to compare the relationship satisfaction of couples in which the female partner was pregnant to couples in which the female partner was not pregnant as there were only 3 women who were pregnant at the time of the survey.

5.6.8 Relationship Variables and Relationship Satisfaction: Summary

Although there were several trends in the data that tended towards significance, the only significant results pertaining to relationship variables and relationship satisfaction were the following:

- both partners in couples in which either partner had previous marriages experienced significantly higher relationship satisfaction in their current IHR than partners in couples in which neither partner had previous marriages; and
- for cohabiting couples, a positive relationship between the female partner's age at commencement of cohabitation and her male partner's current relationship satisfaction.

Relationship variables found to have a *non*-significant relationship with relationship satisfaction included:

- relationship status;
- relationship duration;
- age at marriage for married couples;
- reason for marriage or for marriage in the future;
- number of significant relationships; and
- various child-related variables.

Despite this, a number of interesting trends emerged, suggesting possible relationships between a variety of relationship variables and relationship satisfaction. For example, there was a definite trend in

the data towards a negative relationship between marriage duration and relationship satisfaction for men. In other words, the longer the duration of the marriage, the lower the relationship satisfaction experienced by the male partner tended to be.

Pertaining to the link between relationship satisfaction and reason for marriage, two potential trends were identified: (a) Men whose female partners cited love as a reason for their marriage tended to experience lower relationship satisfaction than men whose female partners did not cite love as a reason for their marriage; and (b) Women who cited pregnancy as a reason for their marriage tended to experience lower relationship satisfaction than women who did not cite pregnancy as a reason for their marriage.

Also of interest was the negative trend for men between relationship satisfaction and the number of children in the household. In other words, the higher the number of children in the household, the lower the relationship satisfaction experienced by the male partner tended to be. Related to this finding, a trend suggested that the male partner's relationship satisfaction may be lower in couples where there were children from previous relationships living in the current household. This is most likely related to the finding that most children from previous relationships living in the current household were those of the female partner.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Limitations of the Present Study

There were several limitations to this study. First, methodological weaknesses include the exclusive use of self-report measures. However, the present study was the first exploratory study of the research project and its objective was to identify relationships and trends that future qualitative studies could pursue. The use of multiple methods including observational methods and qualitative measures such as diary methods would add significantly to the depth of our understanding of relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, the relationship satisfaction measures were not controlled for marital or relationship social desirability and other response biases. The relationship satisfaction measures in the present study were self-report instruments which are rather apparent in terms of their item content and purpose. Thus, participants could choose to engage in “impression management” and thereby make themselves look as good or as bad as they wish (Cheung & Hudson, 1982). This poses a potential threat to the validity of the relationship satisfaction data and as such future research should attempt to control for marital or relationship conventionalisation.

Another limitation of the present study is the correlational and cross-sectional nature of the data. Consequently, neither direction nor causality can be inferred from the results. However, one should keep in mind that the present study was of an exploratory nature and provided a starting point for relationship satisfaction research in the specific community. The extensive literature on marriage and similar relationships is based predominantly on cross-sectional data and, although it has proven valuable in a number of respects, this work reveals little about how IHR may become more or less satisfying over time. The growing interest in the longitudinal course of IHR hints at a new generation of research, in which the emphasis is shifting from predicting outcomes to explaining the patterns of events through which IHR arrive at different outcomes. There is no doubt that this wave of research will benefit from existing empirical accomplishments and from continued methodological developments, however, theoretical frameworks should be used to a greater extent to guide future research. In sum, following couples *over time* using *both self-report and observational data* would allow complex questions about relationship satisfaction to be more adequately addressed.

6.2 Strengths of the Present Study

With regards to participants, the sample included both married and unmarried couples. As such, the changing nature and diversity of relationship forms in the South African context was acknowledged. Another strength of the study was that it assessed couples rather than individuals. This was especially useful for the investigation of gender differences in relationship satisfaction, which examined intra-couple differences rather than differences between men and women who emanate from different couples. The critical question in such research should not be “Are men in IHR more satisfied with their relationships than women in IHR?” as individuals, but rather *within couples* “Are male partners more satisfied with their relationships than female partners?”. Taking into consideration that the majority of studies comparing men’s and women’s marital satisfaction have relied upon individual data rather than couple data (Schumm, Webb, et al., 1998), the findings of the present study regarding gender differences in the relationship satisfaction of couples are particularly noteworthy. A significant contribution to relationship research is made by acknowledging the importance of and representing both partners of the couple in research. It could be argued that such representation is conducive to a more accurate portrayal and understanding of the relationship (Conradie, 2006). For instance, including couples rather than individuals allowed for other more in-depth intra-couple comparisons between female partner’s and males partner’s variables. For example, the relationship between the female partner’s church attendance with her male partner’s relationship satisfaction was investigated (this links female variables with male variables within the same couple).

Pertaining to statistical issues, the more than adequate sample size allowed for statistical analysis not possible with smaller samples. For instance, a number of statistical analyses required participants or couples to be divided into groups based on certain variables (demographic and relationship variables) in order to investigate potential differences in relationship satisfaction between groups. Such a procedure reduces the power to detect a significant result in the data. Thus, the sample size made it possible to conduct a broad array of analyses relating to between-group differences. Furthermore, because the sample was stratified and randomised, the ability to generalise the findings of the present study to the population of the community (and perhaps to other similar semi-rural, low-income Western Cape communities) is made possible. Thus, the present study offers an advantage over many previous studies of relationship satisfaction in IHR that have used samples of convenience (e.g., Bricker, 2005; Pretorius, 1997; Roizblatt et al., 1999)

Other strengths relate to data collection. For instance, the utilisation of a trained team of fieldworkers to collect data (trained in both interviewing skills and in the items of the questionnaires) helped to ensure the validity of data. Items relating to relationship satisfaction (as well as demographic and relationship variables) deal with potentially sensitive information, and fieldworkers were trained to create a safe space for participants to share intimate details of their lives and their IHR. A team of fieldworkers also proved valuable in counteracting practical barriers to collecting data in a community that is comprised loosely of farms with limited access points.

6.3 Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research

6.3.1 Observations from Demographic and Relationship Information

Women's lower employment figure, occupation of less skilled jobs, lower income, limited decision-making power (reflected by findings related to head of household) and greater responsibility of childcare in comparison to men suggest that women in this community hold a weaker economic position in their IHR, and may potentially be vulnerable to economic and/or other abuse. Observations and findings such as these question how much female empowerment has been implemented and engaged with in this community.

From a social constructionism perspective, the demographic and relationship findings provide one with a detailed picture of the social context of the community of study. Such information provides the outsider with a glimpse into how IHR are constructed in this community and how they may be influenced by contextual and community-specific factors such as religion, employment levels, income, semi-rural location, farming area (and thus seasonal nature), educational levels, access to basic resources such as housing, power structures within the household, relationships history, reason for marriage, to name few. In particular, women's lower status in the community has been elucidated. Community samples, rather than representative samples, therefore appear to better serve the aims of community development.

6.3.2 Relationship Satisfaction

Although, on average, female partners were found to be clinically satisfied with their relationships they reported significantly lower relationship satisfaction than their male partners. Moreover, according to the clinical cutoff scores of the IMS and the KMSS, the ratio of dissatisfied women to dissatisfied men ranged from approximately 2:1 (for the IMS) to 4:1 (for the KMSS). Over 20% of women compared to 7% of men in the sample were clinically dissatisfied with their relationships. Such findings provide

support for Bernard's (1972) notion of a "his" and "hers" marriage. Results of the present study parallel frequent international findings that women experience less relationship satisfaction than men in their IHR (e.g., Lu, 2006; Mickelson et al., 2006; Williams & Frieze, 2005).

As argued by Fowers (1991), gender differences in relationship satisfaction found in this study give weight to the view that men reap greater benefits (e.g., mental health benefits) from their IHR relationships than do women. In-depth qualitative interviews are recommended in an attempt to shed light on why partners differ significantly in their levels of relationship satisfaction. In addition, it would be useful to explore the role of potential intervening or moderating factors in the relationship between gender and relationship satisfaction. Perhaps relationship satisfaction in such communities could best be understood using an intersectional approach that explores connections among race, class, and gender (such as that used by Dillaway & Broman, 2001).

Given that gender differences in relationship satisfaction is a rarely researched topic in South African research, it is important to examine whether the present findings can be replicated in other populations in future research. In light of the modest published material on gender differences in relationship satisfaction for South African populations, the present study could be regarded as a significant contribution to the literature.

6.3.3 Demographic and Relationship Variables and Relationship Satisfaction

The demographic and relationship variables in the present study show how the different areas of people's lives are interwoven with their IHR, and specifically their relationship satisfaction (Duck et al., 1997). As such, in light of the limited relationship research in the community of study, the author argues that the findings for demographic and relationship variables and relationship satisfaction provide a good starting point in generating context-specific information and offers a solid base for future research to build upon.

6.3.3.1 Demographic variables and relationship satisfaction

In the present study significant relationships were found between relationship satisfaction and a number of demographic variables. These findings suggest potential directions for future research on relationship satisfaction. For instance, the relationship between relationship satisfaction and education requires clarification. Also, it would be of value to explore mediating factors in the link between relationship satisfaction and various aspects of religiosity (e.g., perception of religiosity) and joint

church activities (e.g., joint church attendance). Future research should consider how institutional contexts such as religion foster partners' participation in IHR, and consequently, how this impacts on relationship satisfaction. On the basis that bed sharing at night was most strongly associated with relationship satisfaction, the present study recommends an in-depth exploration of this link in future research within the South Africa context. The direction of this relationship in the present sample was of particular interest: Did partners not share a bed at night because they were dissatisfied with their relationship or did they experience barriers to sharing a bed at night (e.g., inadequate housing) which contributed to relationship dissatisfaction? Research questions such as, "What were the reasons for not sharing a bed?" could shed some light on this relationship.

Within the investigation of the above relationships, the role of gender should be examined. There was evidence in the present study that male partners' variables and female partners' variables differentially influenced male and female partners' relationship satisfaction. For instance, the female partner's perception of her male partner's religious status was influential in both her own relationship satisfaction and her male partner's relationship satisfaction. However, the male partner's perception of his female partner's religious status did not influence either his own relationship satisfaction or his female partner's relationship satisfaction.

6.3.3.2 Relationship variables and relationship satisfaction

Although there were several trends that tended towards significance, the only relationship variables found to be significantly related to relationship satisfaction were previous marriages and, for cohabiting couples, the age at commencement of cohabitation. Accordingly, the present study recommends research on how relationships history, for example, previous marriages, influences current relationship satisfaction. In light of increasing rates of cohabitation (Statistics South Africa, 2006) and the small amount of research on cohabitation in South Africa, the present study recommends increased research on cohabiting couples.

Although the majority of the relationships between relationship variables and relationship satisfaction were found to be non-significant, a number of interesting trends emerged. These trends suggest possible relationships between a variety of relationship variables and relationship satisfaction, and hence, a variety of potential directions for future research. Furthermore, there were parallels between some of the significant findings and/or trends, suggesting they are worthy of further investigation. For example: (a) The parallel between previous marriages and number of significant relationships (for

women's relationship satisfaction); and (b) the parallel between number of children living in the current household and children from previous relationships living in the current household (for men's relationship satisfaction).

The link between relationship satisfaction and various child-related variables requires clarification and gender should be examined in such an endeavour. Results of the present study suggest that men's but not women's relationship satisfaction may be influenced by variables such as number of children and paternity of children in the household. It may prove of value to follow-up such trends in future research in the South African context.

Another area of potential focus in future research includes the link between relationship satisfaction and reason for marriage. Trends found in the present study suggested that love and pregnancy as reasons for marriage may have the potential to influence current relationship satisfaction. In addition, reason for marriage in the future or reasons for not being married amongst unmarried couples might shed some light on the dynamics of IHR and how IHR forms are changing.

6.3.4 Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Relationship Satisfaction Measures

Most South African studies in which relationship satisfaction measures have been used focus on the results obtained by specific measuring instruments and not on a critical evaluation of the reliability or validity of such instruments within the South African context. Findings of the present study point to evidence for the reliability and convergent validity of the DSS, IMS, and KMSS in measuring relationship satisfaction in one low-income, semi-rural Western Cape community. The DSS is brief and easy to administer, and offers a cost-effective way of assessing the relationship satisfaction of large numbers of couples in low socioeconomic, semi/rural, South African communities, where it is often more challenging to implement larger-scale surveys due to literacy problems and the costs involved in reaching participants in outlying areas.

It appears that the use of these measures was appropriate in this specific community and they may also be appropriate in other low-income South African communities. However, similar studies need to be conducted in order to compare results, and with different types of populations in South Africa, so that normative data can be generated. The KMSS has the potential to be a valuable three-item screening tool for relationship satisfaction which could prove useful in a variety of situations, for example, where there are time constraints on a study or when a larger number of individuals needs to be assessed.

However, its appropriateness as an abbreviated measure of relationship satisfaction in different South African contexts should first be explored. Recommendations include further exploration of the suitability of such measures for different South African communities.

6.4 A Final Note: General Recommendations for the Field of Relationship Satisfaction

The research published in previous decades offers a wealth of information and ideas about relationship satisfaction. A starting point in generating better work in this area may be to delve deeply into the related theories and findings (Bradbury et al., 2000), with theoretical frameworks being used to a greater extent to guide future research. Theoretical and methodological analysis of existing research is required. Moreover, this analysis can serve as a foundation for studies that clarify and complement what is already known about relationship satisfaction. Such studies will be of great value to the extent that they meet the following three criteria (Bradbury et al., 2000):

First of all, there is an ongoing call for large, well-funded intensive longitudinal studies of couples, particularly those that measure functioning at several points in time. Basic research on how IHR develop and deteriorate is lacking in a number of important respects. Data that elucidate the factors that account for changes in relationship satisfaction over key periods of development are urgently required. Secondly, because the majority of research anticipated in the future will be nonexperimental in nature, studies that rule out plausible counter-hypotheses will be of particular value. For the most part, studies of relationship satisfaction tend to be confirmatory in focus. As such, studies that make available discriminant information and evaluate competing models against each other (rather than solely against the null hypothesis) will give way to the most advancement in the field. Finally, it is imperative to conduct research that directly informs and guides specific preventive, clinical, and policy-level interventions for couples and families. This is important not only because of the inherent value in the experimental designs and applied work that is made possible, but also because an applied orientation – an orientation toward finding solutions for problems relevant to couples and families – will greatly sharpen basic research endeavours.

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Addendum A: Demographic and Relationship Questionnaire

OPNAME OOR VERHOUDINGS

VERTROULIK

Datum: _____

Couple Code: _____ Participant Code: _____

Is jy nou in 'n hegte verhouding met iemand?

Ja _____ (proceed with survey)

Nee _____ (discontinue)

My naam is _____ en ek werk by die Universiteit Stellenbosch (Kaapstad). Ek wil jou graag 'n paar vrae oor jou verhoudings vra. Onthou asseblief: As daar enige vrae is wat jou ongemaklik laat voel, hoef jy dit nie te beantwoord nie. Jy kan enige tyd ook vir my sê as jy die onderhoud wil stop.

Baie dankie dat jy ingestem het om aan hierdie studie deel te neem.

SECTION A

Kliënt se voorletters: _____

1) Geslag: ☐ MANLIK ☐ VROULIK

Geboortedatum: (DD/MM/JJJJ) _____

2) Ouderdom: _____

3) Watter taal praat jy by die huis?

- ☐ Afrikaans
☐ Engels
☐ Xhosa
☐ Ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

4) Wat is die hoogste vlak van onderrig wat jy voltooi het? (Kies een)

Geen skoolopleiding nie	
Graad 1/Sub A	
Graad 2/Sub B	
Graad 3/Standerd 1	
Graad 4/Standerd 2	
Graad 5/Standerd 3	
Graad 6/Standerd 4	
Graad 7/Standerd 5	
Graad 8/Standerd 6/Klas 1	
Graad 9/Standerd 7/Klas 2	
Graad 10/Standerd 8/Klas 3/NTS I	
Graad 11/Standerd 9/Klas 4/NTS II	
Graad 12/Standerd 10/Klas 5/Matriek/NTS III	
Sertifikaat met minder as graad 12	
Diploma met minder as graad 12	
Sertifikaat met graad 12	
Diploma met graad 12	
BA-graad (Baccalaureus-graad)	
BA-graad en diploma	
Honneursgraad	
Hoër graad (meesters- of doktersgraad)	

5) Bly jy in Longlands?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

6) Is jy lid van 'n mediese fonds?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

7) Behoort jy aan 'n geloof?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

8) Indien **JA**, aan watter geloof behoort jy? _____

9) Behoort jou maat aan 'n geloof?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

10) Indien **JA**, aan watter geloof behoort jou maat? _____

11) Hoeveel keer per week neem jy deel aan byeenkomste by die kerk? _____

[Fieldworker to calculate church attendance for month i.e. times per month (multiply weekly number by 4) Number of times participant attends church a month_____]

12) Hoeveel keer per week neem jou maat deel aan byeenkomste by die kerk? _____

[Fieldworker to calculate church attendance for month i.e. times per month (multiply weekly number by 4) Number of times participant's partner attends church a month_____]

13) Hoeveel keer per week neem jy en jou maat saam deel aan byeenkomste by die kerk? _____

[Fieldworker to calculate church attendance for month i.e. times per month (multiply weekly number by 4) Number of times a month participant and his/her partner attend church together_____]

14) In Suid-Afrika dink mense dikwels aan hulself in terme van ras. Hoe dink jy oor jouself in terme van ras? OF Aan watter rassegroep dink jy behoort jy?

- ☐ Swart
- ☐ Bruin
- ☐ Indiër
- ☐ Wit
- ☐ Ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

15) Aan watter rassegroep behoort jou maat?

- ☐ Swart
- ☐ Bruin
- ☐ Indiër
- ☐ Wit
- ☐ Ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

16) In watter soort huis leef jy?

- ☐ baksteenhuis op 'n aparte standplaas

- ☐ huis/struktuur in agterplaas
- ☐ informele hut/blyplek in agterplaas
- ☐ informele hut/blyplek NIE in agterplaas NIE
- ☐ ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

17) Wie se huis is dit?

- ☐ joune
- ☐ huweliksmat of *partner*
- ☐ ma of pa
- ☐ ouma of oupa
- ☐ boetie of sussie
- ☐ uitgebreide familie
- ☐ plaaseienaar
- ☐ ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

18) Hoeveel vertrekke is daar in die huis? _____

19) Hoeveel slaapkamers is daar in die huis? _____

20) Wie slaap saam met jou in 'n kamer?

- ☐ niemand nie
- ☐ huweliksmat of *partner*
- ☐ kind
- ☐ ma en/of pa
- ☐ ouma en/of oupa
- ☐ boetie en/of sussie
- ☐ uitgebreide familie
- ☐ ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

21) Wie slaap in die nag saam met jou in die bed?

- ☐ niemand nie
- ☐ huweliksmat of *partner*
- ☐ kind
- ☐ ma en/of pa
- ☐ ouma en/of oupa
- ☐ boetie en/of sussie
- ☐ uitgebreide familie
- ☐ ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

22) Is daar 'n badkamer in die huis?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

23) Is daar elektrisiteit in die huis?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

24) Is daar water in die huis?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

25) Hoe lank bly jy al in Vlotenburg? (Vul in die aantal jare.) _____

26) As Vlotenburg nie jou gewone blyplek is nie, hoekom kom jy hiernatoe (wat is jou rol hier)?

INKOMSTE

27) Verdien jy enige geld?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

[A. As jy tans werk]

28) Indien JA, omtrent hoeveel uur werk jy per week?

- ☐ minder as 10
- ☐ 10 tot 20
- ☐ 21 tot 30
- ☐ 31 tot 40
- ☐ meer as 41

29) Watter soort werk doen jy? _____

30) Hoe dikwels werk jy?

- ☐ volle dag
- ☐ half dag
- ☐ per uur soos werk beskikbaar is
- ☐ seisoenale werk
- ☐ ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

31) Van wanneer af doen jy hierdie werk? _____

Hoeveel geld verdien jy per week en per maand? (**Vul altwee in.**)

32) _____ per week

33) _____ per maand

34) Is daar enige maande in 'n jaar wanneer jy nie geld verdien nie?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

35) Indien ja, hoeveel maande in 'n jaar verdien jy nie geld nie? _____

36) Vir hoeveel persone moet jy sorg (jouself ingesluit)? _____

[B. As jy nie tans werk nie]

37) As jy nie werk het nie, van wanneer af het jy nie werk nie? _____

38) Is daar enige maande in 'n jaar wanneer jy geld verdien?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

39) Indien ja, hoeveel maande in 'n jaar verdien jy geld? _____

40) Wat was die laaste werk wat jy gehad het?

[C. Huishouding]

41) Het jy of enige ander persoon in jou huishouding enige ander vorm van inkomste soos 'n toelaag?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

42) Ongeveer hoeveel geld verdien die mense in jou huishouding altesaam in 'n maand?

MAANDELIKSE INKOMSTE: _____

(Veldwerker bereken die jaarlikse inkomste vir die huishouding.)

43) JAARLIKSE INKOMSTE (huishouding)

- ☐ Geen
- ☐ 1 tot 4 800
- ☐ 4 801 tot 9 600
- ☐ 9 601 tot 19 200
- ☐ 19 201 tot 38 400
- ☐ 38 401 tot 76 800
- ☐ 76 801 tot 153 600
- ☐ 153 601 tot 307 200
- ☐ 307 201 tot 614 400
- ☐ 614 401 tot 1 228 800
- ☐ meer as 1 228 801

Mense het verskillende soorte verhoudings en daar is nie 'n regte of verkeerde manier om verhoudings te 'doen' of the 'hê' nie. Byvoorbeeld, party mense is getroud maar het ook 'n verhouding met iemand anders wat vir hulle net so belangrik is. Party mense kan dalk in 'n verhouding wees met iemand wat dieselfde geslag as hulle is, maar is te skaam om ander daarvan te vertel. Ons wil graag weet hoe mense hulle verhoudings 'doen' en hoe hulle dit ervaar.

44) Is jy nou in 'n hegte verhouding met een persoon?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

45) Is jy nou in 'n hegte verhouding met meer as een persoon?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

46) Indien ja, weet al die persone met wie jy verhoudings het van mekaar?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

47) In watter soort verhouding is jy nou? (Kies net een en vul in.)

[Indien die respondent huidig in meer as een verhouding is, spesifiseer elke verhoudingstipe]

In 'n verhouding maar bly nie saam nie (sedert _____)

Getroud (sedert _____)

Getroud, maar bly nie saam nie (b.v. maat bly/werk in 'n ander dorp)

Bly saam met iemand van dieselfde geslag (sedert _____)

Bly saam met iemand van die teenoorgestelde geslag (sedert _____)

Vervreem (nog getroud, maar bly nie saam nie) (sedert _____)

Geskei (sedert _____)

My maat (*partner*) is oorlede (sedert _____)

[Beskryf die soort verhouding waarin jy nou is as nie een van dié hierbo op jou van toepassing is nie]

48) As jy getroud is of was: Hoekom het jy getrou?

- ☐ godsdienstige redes
- ☐ finansiële redes
- ☐ swangerskap
- ☐ liefde
- ☐ ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

49) As jy nie getroud is nie, om watter rede sal wel trou?

- ☐ godsdienstige redes
- ☐ finansiële redes
- ☐ swangerskap
- ☐ liefde
- ☐ ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

Geskiedenis van verhouding(s)

As jy **geskei** is of jou maat **oorlede** is:

50) Hoe lank was jy getroud? _____

51) Hoeveel keer het jy getrou? _____

52) Hoe lank was jy elke keer getroud? (Vul 'n antwoord in vir elke huwelik.)

Duur met elke maat (partner)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

53) Hoe lank was jy enkellopend tussen die huwelike? (Vul 'n antwoord in vir elke huwelik.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

54) Hoveel verhoudings het jy gehad wat so lank was:

Minder as 1 jaar met 'n maat (partner) _____

1–2 jaar met 'n maat (partner) _____

2–3 jaar met 'n maat (partner) _____

3–5 jaar met 'n maat (partner) _____

5–8 jaar met 'n maat (partner) _____

meer as 8 jaar met 'n maat (partner) _____

55) Hoeveel verhoudings het jy tot nou in jou lewe gehad wat jy voel belangrike verhoudings was? _____

56) Saam met hoeveel maats (partners) het jy in dieselfde huis gebly, _____
en vir hoe lank?

Duur met elke maat (partner)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____

57) Hoeveel kinders is daar in die huishouding? _____

58) Wat is hulle se ouderdomme? _____

59) Wie is die ouers van hierdie kinders?

[Aantal kinders op wie hierdie opsie van toepassing is]

1. Jy en jou huidige maat _____

2. Jou kind uit 'n vorige verhouding _____

3. Jou huidige maat se kind uit 'n vorige verhouding _____

4. Iemand anders se kind _____

60) Het jy enige kinders wat nie by jou in dieselfde huis bly nie?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

61) Indien ja, hoeveel? _____

62) [As die deelnemer 'n vrou is] Is jy tans swanger?

JA ☐ NEE ☐

Hoeveel mense altesaam leef en slaap in die huis waar jy bly?

63) Totale getal wat in die huis leef _____

64) Totale getal wat in die huis slaap _____

65) Wat is jou verhouding met hierdie mense?

Leef

Slaap

1. _____ 1. _____

2. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 3. _____

4. _____ 4. _____

5. _____ 5. _____

6. _____ 6. _____

7. _____ 7. _____

8. _____ 8. _____

9. _____ 9. _____

10. _____ 10. _____

(Veldwerker moet spesifiseer verhouding vir elke persoon)

66) Wie is die hoof van jou huishouding?

☐ jy

☐ 'n ander persoon

[Aan Veldwerker: Indien die deelnemer nie die hoof van die huishouding is nie, vra:]

67) Wat is jou verhouding met hierdie persoon? Die persoon is my:

☐ huweliksmaat of *partner*

☐ ma of pa

☐ ouma of oupa

☐ boetie of sussie

☐ uitgebreide familie

☐ ander (spesifiseer asb.) _____

Addendum B: Dyadic Satisfaction subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale

SECTION B

Hierdie vraelys is bedoel om vas te stel hoe tevrede jy is met jou huidige nabye verhouding. Dit is nie 'n toets nie, so daar is nie regte of verkeerde antwoorde nie. Sê dus net hoe dit regtig vir jou is. Kies by elke vraag een van die antwoorde wat vir jou waar is.

1. Hoe dikwels bespreek jy of oorweeg jy egskeiding, skeiding, of beeëindiging van jou verhouding?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Heeltyd	Meeste van die tyd	Dikwels	Soms	Min	Nooit

2. Hoe dikwels verlaat jy of jou maat die huis na 'n stryery?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Heeltyd	Meeste van die tyd	Dikwels	Soms	Min	Nooit

3. Oor die algemeen, hoe dikwels dink jy dat dinge goed gaan tussen jou en jou maat?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Heeltyd	Meeste van die tyd	Dikwels	Soms	Min	Nooit

4. Neem jy jou maat in jou vertroue?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Heeltyd	Meeste van die tyd	Dikwels	Soms	Min	Nooit

5. Is jy ooit spyt dat jy getroud is/verhouding het.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Heeltyd	Meeste van die tyd	Dikwels	Soms	Min	Nooit

6. Hoe dikwels stry jy en jou maat?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Heeltyd	Meeste van die tyd	Dikwels	Soms	Min	Nooit

7. Hoe dikwels werk jy en jou maat op mekaar se senuwees?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Heeltyd	Meeste van die tyd	Dikwels	Soms	Min	Nooit

8. Soen jy jou maat?

0	1	2	3	4
Elke dag	Amper elke dag	Soms	Min	Nooit

9. Die stippels op die volgende lyn dui verskillende grade van gelukkigheid in jou verhouding aan. Die middelpunt, “gelukkig”, dui die graad van gelukkigheid aan wat die meeste mense in hul verhoudings beleef. Omsirkel asseblief die stippel wat, alles in ag genome, die graad van gelukkigheid van jou verhouding die beste beskryf.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Uiters ongelukkig	Redelik ongelukkig	‘n Bietjie ongelukkig	Gelukkig	Baie gelukkig	Uiters gelukkig	Perfek

10. Watter van die volgende stellings beskryf die beste hoe jy voel oor die toekoms van jou verhouding?

- 5 Ek voel desperaat vir my verhouding om te werk en sal omtrent enige iets doen om te verseker dat dit werk.
- 4 Ek wil baie graag hê my verhouding moet werk en sal alles doen wat ek kan om te verseker dat dit werk.
- 3 Ek wil baie graag hê my verhouding moet werk en ek sal my regverdige deel doen om te verseker dat dit werk.
- 2 Dit sal vir my lekker wees as my verhouding werk, maar ek kan nie veel meer doen as wat ek tans doen nie.
- 1 Dit sal vir my lekker wees as dit werk, maar ek weier om enige iets meer te doen as wat ek tans doen om die verhouding aan die gang te hou.
- 0 My verhouding kan nooit werk nie en daar is nie iets meer wat ek kan doen om die verhouding aan die gang te hou nie.

Addendum C: Index of Marital Satisfaction

Kies by elke vraag een van die 5 antwoorde wat vir jou waar is.

1. Jou maat is liefdevol genoeg

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

2. Jou maat behandel jou sleg.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

3. Jou maat gee regtig vir jou om.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

4. Jy voel dat jy nie weer dieselfde maat sal kies as jy weer kon kies nie.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

5. Jy voel dat jy jou maat kan vertrou.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

6. Jy voel dat julle verhouding besig is om op te breek.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

7. Jou maat verstaan jou nie regtig nie.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

8. Jy voel dat julle verhouding 'n goeie verhouding is.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

9. Julle verhouding is 'n baie gelukkige verhouding.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

10. Julle lewe saam is vervelig.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

11. Julle het baie pret saam.

1 2 3 4 5

[illegible]

12. Jou maat neem jou nie in sy/haar vertroue nie.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

13. Julle verhouding is 'n baie nabye verhouding.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

14. Jy voel dat jy nie op jou maat kan staatmaak nie.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

15. Jy voel dat julle nie genoeg in gemeen het nie.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

16. Julle hanteer argumente en verskille baie goed.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

17. Julle hanteer julle geldsake goed.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit	Baie min	Soms	Meeste van die tyd	Altyd
-------	----------	------	--------------------	-------

18. Jy voel dat jy nooit in die verhouding met jou maat moes gewees het nie.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

19. Jou maat en jy kom baie goed oor die weg.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

20. Julle verhouding is baie stabiel.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

21. Jou maat is regtig vir jou 'n vertroosting.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

22. Jy voel dat jy nie meer vir jou maat omgee nie.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit	Baie min	Soms	Meeste van die tyd	Altyd
-------	----------	------	--------------------	-------

23. Jy voel dat julle verhouding 'n goeie toekoms het.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

24. Jy voel dat julle verhouding leeg is.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

25. Jy voel daar is nie meer opwinding in julle verhouding nie.

1 2 3 4 5

Nooit Baie min Soms Meeste van die tyd Altyd

Addendum D: Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale

Kies by elke vraag een van die antwoorde wat vir jou waar is.

1. Hoe tevrede is jy met jou verhouding?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<hr/>						
Uiters ontevrede	Baie ontevrede	Effens ontevrede	Gemeng of onseker	Effens tevrede	Baie tevrede	Uiters tevrede

2. Hoe tevrede is jy met jou maat in sy/haar rol as jou maat?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<hr/>						
Uiters ontevrede	Baie ontevrede	Effens ontevrede	Gemeng of onseker	Effens tevrede	Baie tevrede	Uiters tevrede

3. Hoe tevrede is jy met jou verhouding met jou maat?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<hr/>						
Uiters ontevrede	Baie ontevrede	Effens ontevrede	Gemeng of onseker	Effens tevrede	Baie tevrede	Uiters tevrede

Addendum E: Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH
INWILLIGING OM DEEL TE NEEM AAN
NAVORSING

Mense se ervarings in nabye verhoudings met die teenoorgestelde verslag.

Ons wil u vra om deel te neem aan 'n navorsingstudie onder die projekleiding van dr Elmien Lesch (DPhil) van die Departement Sielkunde aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

1. DOEL VAN DIE STUDIE

Ons wil graag beter verstaan hoe mense dink, voel en doen in nabye verhoudings met die teenoorgestelde geslag.

2. PROSEDURES

Indien u inwillig om aan die studie deel te neem, vra ons dat u die volgende moet doen:

Eerstens om 'n vraelys te voltooi waarin u gevra sal word om (i) besonderhede te verskaf soos u ouderdom, inkomste, hoe lank u tans in 'n verhouding is, ens., en (ii) inligting oor sekere aspekte van u verhouding te gee.

Tweedens sal u gevra word of u gewillig sal wees om verder aan die projek deel te neem deurdat 'n onderhoud met u gevoer sal word waarin ons u vrae sal vra oor hoe u dink en voel in u nabye verhoudings met die teenoorgestelde geslag..

Laastens, nadat ons al die deelnemers se inligting verwerk het, sal ons u in kennis stel van 'n byeenkoms waar ons die resultate met u sal deel en u terugvoer hierop sal vra. U kan op hierdie stadium kies of u wel hierdie geleentheid wil bywoon.

3. MOONTLIKE RISIKO'S EN ONGEMAKLIKHEID

Dit is moontlik dat sommige vrae u ongemaklik sal laat voel of vir u te persoonlik voel. Onthou egter dat u enige tyd kan weier om vrae te beantwoord en dat u enige tyd die onderhoud kan beëindig.

Dit is ook moontlik dat u gedurende u deelname bewus word van probleme waarvoor u hulp benodig. In hierdie geval sal die veldwerker u verwys na 'n persoon of organisasie wat u sal kan help.

4. MOONTLIKE VOORDELE VIR PROEFPERSONE EN/OF VIR DIE SAMELEWING

Tans het ons 'n baie beperkte begrip van hoe pare in u gemeenskap dink, voel en doen in verhoudings en u bydrae sal ons help om 'n beter begrip te ontwikkel. Verder sal die inligting wat ons van u en die ander deelnemers kry, help om meer effektiewe hulpgewing aan pare in u gemeenskap te ontwikkel.

5. VERGOEDING VIR DEELNAME

U sal R20 ontvang indien u die vraelys voltooi.

6. VERTROULIKHEID

Enige inligting wat deur middel van die navorsing verkry word en wat met u in verband gebring kan word, sal vertroulik bly en slegs met u toestemming bekend gemaak word of soos deur die wet vereis.

Indien dit duidelik sou word dat u op een of ander manier mishandel word of iemand anders mishandel, sal die onderhoudsvoerder eties verplig sal wees om die saak te verwys na 'n toepaslike persoon of instansie wat dit verder sal aanspreek.

Indien die resultate van die studie gepubliseer word, sal die vertroulikheid van u inligting beskerm word deurdat die naam van u gemeenskap nie bekend gemaak sal word nie. Publikasie van die resultate sal dus nie veroorsaak dat u persoonlike inligting bekend sal word aan andere nie.

7. DEELNAME EN ONTTREKKING

U kan self besluit of u aan die studie wil deelneem of nie. Indien u inwillig om aan die studie deel te neem, kan u te eniger tyd u daaraan onttrek sender enige nadelige gevolge. U kan ook weier om op bepaalde vrae te antwoord, maar steeds aan die studie deelneem. Die ondersoeker kan u aan die studie onttrek indien omstandighede dit noodsaaklik maak. Indien dit blyk dat u ernstige sielkundige of verhoudingsprobleme ervaar, sal u deelname deur die ondersoeker beeindig moet word ten spyte van u inwilliging. U sal dan verwys word na 'n persoon of organisasie wat u met hierdie probleme kan help.

8. IDENTIFIKASIE VAN ONDERSOEKERS

Indien u enige vrae of besorgdheid omtrent die navorsing het, staan dit u vry om in verbinding te tree met Dr. Elmien Lesch by tel. no. 021-8083455. Die adres is: Departement Sielkunde, Universiteit van Stellenbosch, Privaatsak XI, Matieland, 7602.

9. REGTE VAN PROEFPERSONE

U kan te enige tyd u inwilliging terugtrek en u deelname beeindig, sonder enige nadelige gevolge vir u. Deur deel te neem aan die navorsing doen u geensins afstand van enige wetlike regte, else of regsmiddel nie. Indien u vrae het oor u regte as proefpersoon by navorsing, skakel met Me Maryke Husselman by die Eenheid vir Navorsingsontwikkeling (021-8084623).

VERKLARING DEUR PROEFPERSOON

Die bostaande inligting is aan my, _____gegee en verduidelik deur _____ in Afrikaans en ek is die taal magtig. Ek is die geleentheid gebied om vrae te stel en my/sy/haar vrae is tot my/sy/haar bevrediging beantwoord.

Ek willig hiermee vrywillig in om deel te neem aan die studie. 'n Afskrif van hierdie vorm is aan my gegee.

Naam van deelnemer

VERKLARING DEUR ONDERSOEKER

Ek verklaar dat ek die inligting in hierdie dokument vervat verduidelik het aan

_____. Hy/sy is aangemoedig en oorgenoeg tyd gegee om vrae aan my te stel. Die gesprek is in Afrikaans gevoer en geen vertaler is gebruik nie.

Handtekening van ondersoeker

Datum